

## **Resilience in the Darkness: An Update on Child and Adolescent Night Commuters in Northern Uganda**



**Women's Commission For Refugee Women and Children**

**February 2005**



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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children works to improve the lives and defend the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children and adolescents. We advocate for their inclusion and participation in programs of humanitarian assistance and protection. We provide technical expertise and policy advice to donors and organizations that work with refugees and the displaced. We make recommendations to policy makers based on rigorous research and information gathered on fact-finding missions. We join with refugee women, children and adolescent to ensure that their voices are heard from the community level to the highest councils of governments and international organizations. We do this in the conviction that their empowerment is the surest route to the greater well being of all forcibly displaced people. The Women's Commission is an independent affiliate of the International Rescue Committee. The Women's Commission was founded in 1989.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## I. Introduction

**“Where else in the world have there been 20,000 kidnapped children? Where else in the world have 90 per cent of the population in large districts been displaced? Where else in the world do children make up 80 per cent of the terrorist insurgency movement?...For me the situation is a moral outrage...We hope, on the humanitarian side, that we’re now seeing a beginning of an end to this 18-year, endless litany of horrors, where the children are the fighters and the victims in northern Uganda...This would take a much bigger international investment – in money, in political engagement, in diplomacy and also more concerted efforts to tell the parties there is no military solution...there is a solution through reconciliation, an end to the killing and the reintegration and demobilization of the child combatants.”**  
-- Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator<sup>1</sup>

Over the last eighteen years, war has devastated northern Uganda. The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel force led by Joseph Kony, professes to fight a spiritual war for the Acholi people against the government of Uganda (GOU) and its military, the Ugandan People’s Defense Forces (UPDF). The LRA’s political agenda remains unclear, although Kony says he wants the Ten Commandments to be the rule of law for Uganda. However, the LRA has been responsible for countless atrocities committed against its own community, including the abduction and abuse of tens of thousands of children and adolescents,<sup>2</sup> who make up most of the rebel army.

In March 2002, the Ugandan government began Operation Iron Fist, a military offensive against the LRA. Since the operation began, the LRA has intensified its attacks on civilian communities, increasing abductions, forced recruitment and massacres.<sup>3</sup> Abducted girls and boys are forced to commit unthinkable atrocities against each other and against their communities.

More than half of the young people in the region who have not been abducted live in displaced persons camps, where access to education, health care and other basic necessities is minimal and security is uncertain. Girls are particularly vulnerable to abuse, rape and sexual exploitation or enslavement. An estimated 1.6 million Ugandans have been displaced by the war – over 90 percent of the population in the north.<sup>4</sup> Nearly 70 percent of the displaced population is under 25 years old.<sup>5</sup>

Amongst the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Uganda are an estimated 44,000 “night commuters” in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader Districts.<sup>6</sup> The night commuters are mostly children, adolescents and women who flee their villages or IDP camps each night for town centers seeking safety from LRA attack. These night commuters represent only a small portion of the IDP population, but their situation dramatically illustrates how inadequate protection has led to increasing violence against children and adolescents.

Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children (Women’s Commission) Children and Adolescents Project staff conducted an initial investigation into night commuter conditions in December 2003. The Women’s Commission traveled to Gulu and Kitgum Districts in northern Uganda and to Kampala, Uganda’s capital in the south. The principal purpose of the trip was to assist two youth organizations – Watwero Rights Focus Initiative (Watwero) and Gulu Youth for Action (GYFA)<sup>7</sup> – in developing advocacy strategies for projects the groups are undertaking with funding from American Jewish World Service (AJWS). The Women’s Commission conducted a follow-up investigation September 13-27, 2004. After the December 2003 investigation, the Women’s Commission published a report: *No Safe Place to Call Home: Child and Adolescent Night Commuters in Northern Uganda*. This document is an addendum to *No Safe Place*. Both are available on the Women’s Commission’s website: [www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org).

The findings in *Resilience in the Darkness* are based on joint research by the Women's Commission, Watwero, and GYFA. The two youth groups identified changes since December 2003 in the motivations for nightly displacement and the conditions night commuters face in sleeping spaces and in transit. They identified continuing and new problems and proposed solutions. Specific issues addressed were adequacy of sleeping spaces and materials, lighting, sanitation and water, sense of security and supervision, gender-based violence and other abuses. During both trips, Watwero organized a team of its members to work with the Women's Commission to conduct investigations into the situation of the night commuters. The September 2004 investigation team met with night commuters and those caring for them, focusing especially on how their nightly living conditions and security have changed since the previous investigation. In Gulu, GYFA members also assisted the Women's Commission in revisiting night commuters and their caregivers.

Interviews were conducted at the same sites as the December 2003 investigation – in Kitgum at St. Joseph's Mission Hospital, Kitgum Government Hospital and Kitgum Public School, and in Gulu at Noah's Ark Night Commuter Center.<sup>8</sup> The bus park and shop verandahs in Kitgum were not revisited, but reports of night commuter activity in these spaces were provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Sample questions used in interviews with night commuters are attached. (See Appendix, page 15). This report also describes current strategies and activities implemented by humanitarian assistance agencies, the United Nations, donors, the GOU and youth groups in northern Uganda.

This report provides information on the conditions and security of night commuters in Gulu and Kitgum Districts. The section on Gulu does not provide as much detail as the Kitgum section due to fewer investigations conducted in Gulu. The Women's Commission was unable to conduct specific investigations amongst the night commuters in Gulu due to a new shelter policy instructing night commuters to not answer questions from non-staff members. Each section provides an overview on sleeping accommodations; basic health and sanitation; and safety and security. There are separate sections discussing the impact of gangs on the night commuters, and on gender-based violence. The report concludes with a section on responses to the night commuter crisis and recommendations. This report provides a glimpse into the continuing night commuter conditions and is not comprehensive. The issues covered in this report need continued investigation and documentation, and call for an immediate and comprehensive response from the international community.

## II. Continued Lack of Security and Inadequate Sleeping Conditions for Night Commuters

In any emergency, children have the right to basic protection, including adequate water, sanitation and hygiene; food security, nutrition and food aid; shelter; access to medical services; education; and physical security.<sup>9</sup> Denial of any of these basic rights leaves children vulnerable to physical and emotional suffering and abuse. Displaced communities, particularly children, are the most vulnerable to exclusion from these rights and the abuse that can result. Several reports by the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have shown that night commuters are suffering as a result of inadequate protection and security.<sup>10</sup>

Many of the night commuter sites that the Women's Commission visited in Kitgum and Gulu Districts in December 2003 had a visibly reduced number of night commuters in September 2004. The general administrator at the Kitgum Government Hospital and the UNICEF protection officer in Kitgum, however, indicated that night commuter numbers in other districts, such as Pader and Soroti, may have increased. Whereas the numbers of night commuters have decreased in Kitgum and Gulu due to a decrease in LRA activity in those areas, the sleeping conditions and physical security (in Kitgum) have changed little. OCHA reports that night commuters may have reached a peak population of at least 53,000.<sup>11</sup>

Girls, women, boys and men amongst the night commuters and staff report that sexual harassment and rape continue to occur along transit routes and in sleeping spaces in the town centers. Most youth report that they are still walking either alone or with a small group of other youth. A small percentage of the night commuters are adults and parents, but generally, most parents are still not accompanying their children to the sleeping spaces. The roads that lead to the sleeping centers remain unlit and perilous for the unaccompanied children. In Kitgum, more night commuters responded that they are coming from nearby IDP camps; in previous investigations, they listed the villages as their primary point of origin. This is attributed to the lack of sleeping spaces in the camps as well as the ongoing insecurity and threat of abduction by the LRA. The night commuters remain at a high risk of exposure to infectious diseases, HIV/AIDS and early pregnancy. Access to sanitation and clean water at several of the sites either remains scarce, or has become altogether absent.

Sleeping conditions and security for night commuters in Gulu and Kitgum remain significantly different. These differences are also evident in the markedly different level of district and international support provided to night commuters and organizations that care for them during the ongoing crisis.

### Gulu Night Commuters

During the December 2003 investigations in Gulu, an administrator at Noah's Ark night commuter center reported that plans to increase the number of tents and latrines was underway.<sup>12</sup> More latrines and new UNICEF tents for the night commuters at Noah's Ark were visible during the September 2004 investigation. Noah's Ark, and reportedly, Gulu District has seen a drop in the number of night commuters using the centers.<sup>13</sup>

Night commuters were visibly involved in a variety of activities including song, dance, prayers and daily "moral lessons." However, a few children were seen to be uninvolved with the main activities and remained separated from the larger group of children and supervisors, either preparing the sleeping spaces or engaged in unsupervised activities.



*Night commuters are capable of helping their peers, such as these boys at the Noah's Ark Night Commuter Center in Gulu. But they must have more supervision to prevent potential abuses in the absence of caring adults.*

In December 2003, UPDF soldiers were visible directly outside the gates of the center, and were assigned to provide security for the night commuters. This role has now been given to the Gulu police, who are reported to typically not arrive until late in the evening.<sup>14</sup> When the Women's Commission staff left the Noah's Ark Night Commuter Center around 9:00 PM, there were no police present outside the main gates of the center.

The Women's Commission was not allowed to conduct a specific investigation into the occurrences of rape against night commuters in Gulu. A new policy prevents night commuters at Noah's Ark (and potentially at other night commuter centers) from answering non-staff members' questions. This policy can provide protection to young night commuters from further emotional harm connected to their interviews, but can also stop important information concerning their living conditions and treatment from reaching impartial authorities who are empowered to address night commuter needs.<sup>15</sup> One unidentified boy at Noah's Ark also stated that some of the adult supervisors beat them for misbehaving. Information on gender-based violence against night commuters in Gulu will be covered in a later section.

### **Kitgum Night Commuters**

The conditions and security of night commuters in Kitgum District continues to be in stark contrast to Gulu District. The Kitgum District government has still not launched an official coordinated and comprehensive response to the night commuter emergency. Instead, the burden and responsibility have been left primarily to individual volunteer administrators at night commuter sleeping spaces, and NGOs and UN agencies.<sup>16</sup> Despite the efforts of some in the international community, this continued lack of support has allowed chaotic and dangerous sleeping conditions for night commuters in Kitgum to continue.

According to the International Rescue Committee (IRC), 79 percent of the night commuters in Kitgum are experiencing a second form of displacement having already been forced to flee their home villages for displaced people's camps. The majority of the night commuters in Kitgum are between the ages of 9 and 16 years, half are female and more than 54 percent say they travel without a parent to their sleeping spaces.<sup>17</sup> The IRC study found that 40 percent of night commuters reported being fearful of attacks in their sleeping space and 22 percent reported having nightmares while sleeping (amongst those who sleep under shop verandahs).<sup>18</sup> OCHA said in its September 2004 situation report on Kitgum that it had received "alarming revelations of abuses among the verandah dwellers, ranging from rapes of adolescent females, harassment of children by soldiers, molestation and appalling sanitary conditions."<sup>19</sup>

#### *Accommodation*

Several new night commuter shelters have been built by a partnership of NGOs and agencies, including the Association of Volunteers in International Service (AVSI), European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Oxfam. Despite additional shelters and an overall decrease in the number of those commuting, night commuters in Kitgum continue to lack adequate sleeping spaces, forcing many to sleep in the dirt and in the open.



*Night commuters require more material and security assistance. Shelters, such as this one built by partnering NGOs in Kitgum, northern Uganda, provide some relief and security.*

Child night commuters at the Kitgum Government Hospital are still making their own shelters using sheets of plastic to protect them from the rain. Moreover, sleeping spaces are still mixed, forcing girls to sleep near boys who may try to harm them. The Kitgum Government Hospital General Administrator explained that many of the tents were meant to be used for only six months; however, most of the tents

have been used for well over a year and have become torn from storms and overuse. Watchmen at Kitgum Government Hospital add that when it rains, there is often fighting amongst the night commuters over dry spaces to sleep.

### *Water, Sanitation and Light*

Night commuters in all of the sleeping spaces visited reported that there were still not enough usable latrines or clean water. Night guards at St. Joseph's Mission Hospital claimed that children end up defecating out in the open,<sup>20</sup> increasing the likelihood of disease spreading amongst the children. Beatrice Okaka, the headmistress at Kitgum Public Primary School explained that the administration was no longer able to pay for the water and electricity used by night commuters. Without any additional financial support or tax credits from the district government, the public water and electricity were shut off to the night commuters. Similar reports were given at one of the other sleeping sites. Some administrators claim that a few of the night commuters and non-commuting residents of Kitgum town were taking water away for personal use and leaving the latrines in an unusable state. Several night commuters reported that they are personally expected to wash down the latrines each day. Cornelius Williams, UNICEF protection officer and field coordinator in Kitgum District, feels that "child night commuters should not be expected to clean up the filth of others, particularly if there are other residents of Kitgum leaving the latrines in a mess."<sup>21</sup>

Several children sleeping at Kitgum Public School reported that they are expected to pay up to 500 Ugandan shillings every 20 days to pay for electricity, water and trash removal. Likewise, several girls at Kitgum Government Hospital reported that they are expected to pay up to 200 shillings for candles if they choose to sleep inside a designated shelter. When asked how they find the money to pay the fees, some of the children responded that they do odd jobs in town, such as collecting water and firewood, and cleaning houses and latrines. Many of those who responded also identified themselves as orphans.

It is currently unclear if night commuters are still expected to pay fees for their stay at various night commuter spaces. The Women's Commission received other reports that this practice had been addressed,<sup>22</sup> although electricity and water are still not readily available for night commuters at Kitgum Public Primary School and is limited at the government hospital. According to a survey conducted by the IRC, an average of 42 percent of the night commuters do not have access to lighting near their sleeping spaces.<sup>23</sup> Mr. Williams stated: "The night commuters should not be expected to pay for basic amenities in the night commuter spaces when they are forced out of their homes. It is the government's responsibility to provide for these needs."<sup>24</sup>

### *Security*

District government and security officials are not adequately addressing the security concerns of night commuters in Kitgum. Night commuters continue to need effective security personnel who can prevent abuses against commuters, and continue to need adequate lighting en route to and within night commuter spaces. Several of the night commuters complained that without enough lighting and security personnel, they have continued to feel vulnerable to the bullying and attacks of gangs of boys. Without police support, administrators at most night commuter spaces ask unarmed volunteers to act as watchmen.

Watchmen reported that most incidences of sexual assault occur in unlit corners of the sleeping compounds and along the security fence. Some children reported that the dark roads and many trees and bushes en route to the sleeping spaces gave attackers places to hide and wait for unaccompanied girls.

Some children also reported that some of the night commuter staff and watchmen have also beaten children for misbehaving. Mr. Williams of UNICEF responded to these reports saying that by no means should anyone be abusing these children and that there should be training and accountability for volunteers and staff who supervise the night commuters. Furthermore, he explained that children should also have a youth-friendly mechanism through which they can report abuses, and that there should be monitors in place looking out for the interests of the children.



During the Women's Commission's December 2003 trip, night commuters at Kitgum Public Primary School complained that the absence of a security fence around the school compound made it easier for boys to enter the sleeping space and attack and rape. (See section on gangs below.) Soon after, Oxfam International built a perimeter fence around the school. The night commuters reported that the fence increased their security significantly. However, due to reports that school administrators were closing the gate during school hours to keep out late students, Oxfam removed the gate from the fence.<sup>25</sup> Night commuters say that the removal of the gate has created the same level of insecurity as before the fence was built. The watchmen have no way of keeping the boys outside of the perimeter.

### **Gangs contribute to insecurity for night commuters in Kitgum**

Many young people, administrators and watchmen reported that small gangs of boys continue to be a major cause of violence within the sleeping spaces. Some children and volunteer watchmen explained that the number of these gangs and the level of violence they perpetrate have increased. The size of the gangs was not made clear, nor was the frequency of the encounters with the gangs determined. It was also not explained how many of the night commuter centers in Kitgum are faced with this issue.

The gangs of boys are reported to sometimes be accompanied by adult men, and both men and boys are reported to at times enter the sleeping spaces drunk and hostile. Several watchmen claim that some of the gangs and adult men frequent a nearby disco before causing havoc at the sleeping centers. The gangs of boys are reported to terrorize the younger children and steal their blankets and sleeping mats. Children and watchmen reported that the gangs of boys are also known to rape girls. Watchmen (all of whom were unarmed) also report that often when they try to intervene, the gangs attack them with stones. Several watchmen at Kitgum Government Hospital and Kitgum Public Primary School explained that the gangs of boys threaten everyone, including the shelter staff.

#### ***Displaced teachers, night commuters, surrogate parents***

In Kitgum, there are approximately 6,300 adults amongst the many night commuters. (IRC Uganda, *Kitgum District Night Commuters Survey Report*, June 2004)

A handful of these adult night commuters at Kitgum Public Primary School are teachers who have also been displaced by the war. They say that their meager salaries are not enough to pay for rent near Kitgum town. They, like the children that they teach, must commute nightly and sleep at the school at which they work. The school administrators provide them with a space to store their bedding during the day. The teachers explained to the Women's Commission that they have chosen a noble career that requires them to sacrifice. Without sacrifice, they say they could not be teachers. However, they report that because they are considered civil servants, they are not eligible for assistance from the government and that they are not in an official camp. One teacher remarked emphatically while pointing at his school surroundings, "Is this not *our* camp?" They report that their names were removed from the list of eligible recipients for UN food distribution due to their status as civil servants. The teachers explain that the gangs of boys that infiltrate their sleeping space also terrorize them. When asked what they do when the boys come and begin to abuse the commuters, the teachers responded, "We hide."

Despite their personal struggles, the teachers say that they must also act as surrogate parents to the child night commuters. They teach them during the day and do their best to watch over them at night. One of the teachers closed the conversation with the remarks: "We are here to die together. We may be losing hope for the future, but we are *resilient!*"

*Richard, 12-year-old boy from just outside Kitgum town center*<sup>26</sup>

**There are always gangs of boys who come here (Kitgum Public Primary School). I had my blanket stolen by some of them. They also hit us with stones. Yesterday a ten-year-old boy was hit hard in the head with a stone. I went to the security guard, but he did nothing to help. He was afraid. Last month I was beaten up too. The older boys hit me with a stone here on my head (shows a big scar). The next morning I went to my father who took me to the hospital. Now I just try and hide whenever the gangs come into the school.**

At Kitgum Government Hospital and Kitgum Public Primary School administrators say they have submitted written requests to the local authorities, including the Regional District Commissioner (RDC) and UPDF for security assistance. Both administrators say that their requests have not received any response.

## **Reports of Sexual Harassment and Rape in Gulu and Kitgum Continue**

**Gender-based violence (GBV) and exploitation of displaced girls and women have been reported to aid workers across the conflict-affected areas, including in IDP camps, the night commuters' sites, public places, etc. There are few established child (and women's) protection agencies or networks, and victims find it difficult confidentially to report for medical treatment or counseling.**

*Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): Humanitarian Appeal 2005 for Uganda, UN OCHA, 11/11/04*

Girls, volunteers and administrators at the night commuter centers continue to report occurrences of harassment and sexual abuse in both Gulu and Kitgum. Several reports researched by other NGOs and agencies on night commuters have provided some quantitative information on the frequency of a broader range of sexual abuse (including exchange of sexual favors for money or food), but information on rape is limited. The Women's Commission hopes that its research into the rape of night commuters will persuade government and NGO officials to specifically investigate rape both quantitatively and qualitatively, and take immediate steps to address this continuing abuse. The following information is an overview of the Women's Commission's findings on sexual assault at Kitgum Public Primary School, Kitgum Government Hospital and St. Joseph's Mission Hospital in Kitgum. The Women's Commission did not conduct an investigation at Noah's Ark Night Commuter Center in Gulu, but instead received a second hand report from a volunteer from Charity for Peace Foundation Night Commuter Center.

### *Gulu*

As explained above, the Women's Commission was unable to conduct a specific investigation into rape in Gulu due to instructions given to night commuters to not speak to non-staff members. However, a volunteer working at the Charity for Peace Foundation Night Commuter Center and participant in the GYFA workshop did report that older boys sometimes take girls to dark corners of the compound during general assemblies. She says that there are not enough staff to watch over everyone, allowing opportunistic boys to abuse and rape girls. The shelter volunteer reported that some girls who are raped may occasionally receive HIV/AIDS counseling but do not receive psychosocial counseling.<sup>27</sup> The frequency of rape in Gulu night commuter centers was not determined during this investigation.

Shelter administration, NGO and government officials should investigate the real number of rapes of night commuters, what security and societal gaps are allowing the rapes to occur and how best to prevent rape from happening. Night commuter center administrators should regularly monitor the situation and develop a way to address it. Volunteers at night commuter centers should be trained in identifying rape survivors and providing a first line of confidential communication including recommending them for comprehensive clinical care and professional counseling.<sup>28</sup> Partnerships with professional psychosocial personnel and hospitals should also be

fostered. The numbers of volunteers and paid staff should be increased to reduce the number of unsupervised young people.

### *Kitgum*

Adolescents at several Kitgum night commuter centers continue to report that girls are harassed and at times sexually assaulted and raped as they travel to their sleeping spaces and, increasingly, within the night commuter sites. They also continue to name perpetrators as a combination of adolescent boys, men from the community and government soldiers.

#### ***Ronald Opira, Watwero youth director and co-investigator in Kitgum<sup>29</sup>***

**Just a few moments ago, I spoke with a group of children at St. Joseph's Mission Hospital. They explained that last night they had watched several Local Defense Unit soldiers try to attack three girls just outside the hospital. Some of the children who were walking nearby started to run in all directions. The girls managed to run away during the confusion. The three soldiers ran off too. The children told me that they could identify the girls if I needed them to.**

**The children reported to me that the soldiers had been hiding behind some large trees on the road that comes up to the hospital gate. This road is very dark and has many places for people to hide. The Labuje IDP camp is also nearby, so there are many LDU soldiers with guns nearby as well. I plan to talk to the security officer at the district council about the dark road to the hospital and the soldiers who are causing these problems. The soldiers are supposed to be here to protect us, not to attack young girls. The police are not doing enough either to watch out for the young ones.**

Beatrice Okaka, Headmistress at Kitgum Public Primary School, says that gangs of boys continue to harass girls staying at the school. She explains that the gangs usually try and pick out a girl they want to be with. The previous night, she reported, a gang of boys and one man tried to take away three girls. Fortunately, someone happened to come up to the school in a vehicle, scaring the would-be attackers away.<sup>30</sup>

Even in night commuter centers where some security from outside gangs of boys does exist, some girls continue to express concern over the mixed spaces they must sleep in. Without adequate support and coordination, centers such as the Kitgum Government Hospital have been unable to organize separate sleeping spaces for boys and girls. This has directly provided boys with opportunities to abuse girls.

#### ***Four adolescent girls speaking in turn; one is 16 years, the other three are 13 years old<sup>31</sup>***

**This hospital is not secure. There is too little light here. We do not have separate sleeping spaces and boys often try to sleep near us. We would prefer a separate sleeping space, even if it were with the old women. The boys try to force themselves on girls when we are sleeping. The boys also try to force girls on the road to the hospital. This happens almost every night. So we try to walk in groups because we do not have the strength to fight the boys alone. When girls are raped, they do not receive testing for HIV. There is no counseling either. There is no protection on the roads to the hospital. Even though we only walk two kilometers, it is still dangerous.**

Ms. Okaka says that the girls rarely tell shelter administrators what happened, because “they are too shy, but we can hear them crying.” Without a clear and confidential system to report rape cases and other abuses, survivors are left without recourse and a support system to help them overcome the trauma. Administrators who try to account for girls’ lack of reporting rape cases as a sign of girls’ “shyness,” are placing too much responsibility on the survivors. Little is being done to address the larger societal stigma attached to girls who are raped. Priority must be given to sensitizing parents and other community members about rape. The

community must also create a reliable and well-monitored confidential system of support and prosecution to empower girls to report rape and to prevent rape from happening.

The frequency of sexual assault against night commuters in Kitgum has not been determined. Reports from girls and administrators, however, indicate that the number of occurrences is alarming enough to demand further in-depth investigations and a coordinated and immediate response from all sectors of society.

*Lilly, 17-year-old girl from just outside Kitgum town center<sup>32</sup>*

**I come from just outside Kitgum only two kilometers away. I have been coming to sleep here (Kitgum Public Primary School) for the last three years because the other sleeping shelters are always full. But I still fear this place because there is no gate and there is no security. At times boys come here at night and look for girls. The other night, gangs of older boys and some men took six girls away. If the girls try to refuse, they are threatened and told that they will be killed. We have tried to tell the authorities, but they never respond. We have no support here. We really need a gate to keep out the gangs. That would make me feel safer.**

District health and law enforcement officials should conduct in-depth investigations of rape of night commuters with the support and assistance of the international and local community. All efforts to ensure confidentiality and protection of survivors should be taken during the investigation and followed up with a coordinated and immediate response. Survivors should be offered confidential testing and counseling. Perpetrators must be punished. Community leaders should address rape by working with the community to reduce the stigma attached to survivors and educate men and boys on the role they can play to end rape.

### **III. International and Local Response to Night Commuters' Safety and Concerns**

The GOU bears the principal responsibility to protect and assist its citizens, but the international community must continue to pressure the GOU to fulfill this responsibility. The United Nations must work with NGOs and Ugandan organizations, including youth and women's groups, to address the many humanitarian needs and concerns of young people in northern Uganda. The protection of young people is a participatory effort that must occur at local and international levels. Young people have to be given a safe space to not only offer their opinion on what security and participation means, they must also have the financial and capacity-building support of adults as they take steps to address insecurity. Humanitarian assistance in the form of shelter, water and sanitation projects, and a few recreational activities has increased as a result of increased awareness to the situation in northern Uganda. Some districts, however, seem to receive less assistance than others. Gulu District night commuter centers and IDP camps have more resources available to them than Kitgum. Overall, humanitarian aid and security have not increased to levels that IDPs and night commuters throughout northern Uganda require. The following is a brief list of some of the activities being carried out.

#### **United Nations**

##### **OCHA**

During the ongoing night commuter crisis, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has continued its role coordinating humanitarian activities in northern Uganda. Mohammed Siryon, head of the OCHA office in Kitgum, said, "The situation is desperate, but relief agencies are trying to set up management structures, through which support could be given to these children."<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, has continued to call for stronger international attention and immediate response in northern Uganda following a trip he made to the region in November 2003. He has publicly called the conflict in northern Uganda the most child-focused humanitarian crisis in the world.

## UNICEF

During the Women's Commission's December 2003 trip, UNICEF had not yet established a physical presence in northern Uganda. Coinciding with a trip by UNICEF's director, Carol Bellamy, in May 2004, UNICEF has established two offices in the north – one in Gulu and one in Kitgum. Additionally, UNICEF has placed a child protection officer at each site, and coordinates with OCHA. As of September 2004, UNICEF had not yet begun implementing comprehensive activities to assist night commuters in either Kitgum or Gulu. They were in the process of developing a protection strategy in consultation with partnering NGOs and local organizations and officials.



*UNICEF has provided new tents for night commuters at Noah's Ark Night Commuter Center in Gulu, northern Uganda. More protection officers through the north would add significantly to the security of night commuters and other displaced youth.*

UNICEF believes that their assistance role to night commuters should be examined as a protection and security issue more than a material assistance issue. They believe that NGOs have the capacity to raise funding for material support to the shelters. UNICEF would like to see NGOs “adopt” centers to support both commuters and youth groups, with a priority on reorganizing the shelters rather than building more. They would also like to see greater attention given to transit issues for the commuters. UNICEF has been consulting with those who sleep under the verandahs in Kitgum to learn more about the social structures of night commuters' lives. UNICEF has named night commuters as one of its priorities.<sup>34</sup> UNICEF sees one of its biggest roles as working with district council officials to recognize the government's responsibility to night commuters.

## Uganda military

The Political Civil Relationships Officer for the UPDF in Kitgum, Lt. Oscar Malinga, explained that security for night commuters falls under the roles and responsibility of the local police. In regards to crimes committed by soldiers against civilians, Lt. Malinga explained: “Petty violations are handled by the police. Grievous issues are handled by the military. The difficulty is that people don't report the crimes. There is a need for a better reporting mechanism.” However, there is a “divided justice issue,” according to Lt. Malinga; there is a code of conduct in place for the UPDF, and efforts are being made to put one in place for the Local Defense Units (LDUs).<sup>35</sup> He confirmed, however, that UPDF law does extend to LDU soldiers.<sup>36</sup> (For further background on Local Defense Units, please read *No Safe Place to Call Home*.)

## Nongovernmental organizations

### Gulu

Within Gulu District, mainly NGOs, including Charity for Peace Foundation, Noah's Ark, the African Medical and Research Foundation, Rural Focus Uganda and others, provide the infrastructure and funds to oversee the welfare and security of night commuters in each of the designated official night commuter centers (refer to *No Safe Place to Call Home* for further background). They do this with the valuable volunteer work of many administrative staff at local hospitals, schools and government offices where night commuters sleep. Gulu shelters appear to be providing the same level of support to night commuters as during the December 2003 mission, but have provided additional shelters, lighting and latrines. Médecins Sans Frontières has also provided medical assistance to night commuters at some of these centers, treating children for scabies and conducting small health trainings.<sup>37</sup> To help provide more sufficient adult supervision of the night commuters, some NGOs, such as Oxfam, have trained adult volunteers to stay with the children and adolescents.

## Kitgum

### Oxfam and St. Joseph's Mission

Humanitarian organizations in Kitgum are limited by a two-kilometer perimeter from Kitgum town center and a 9:00 PM curfew at night, preventing them from monitoring and assisting outside night commuter sleeping areas.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, unofficial night commuter centers in Kitgum still do not have the same level of NGO support as Gulu District shelters. Currently, Oxfam is targeting sanitation issues within night commuter spaces, whereas both the IRC and AVSI are collaborating with UNICEF to focus on broader protection concerns. Various NGOs, such as Oxfam and AVSI, are training adult volunteers to act as supervisors of individual shelters and tents. St Joseph's Mission continues to operate a private hospital that also provides space for night commuters and partially funds their limited protection and assistance activities, including video screenings on HIV/AIDS and other STIs. St. Joseph's Mission Hospital is the only site visited that provides separate sleeping spaces for boys and girls.

### AVSI

AVSI has constructed four permanent shelters (one in cooperation with Oxfam) for night commuters at St. Joseph's Hospital and Kitgum Government Hospital. This has provided 1,000 additional sleeping spaces in Kitgum. Through ECHO-funded programming AVSI continues to provide support to the five main hospitals in northern Uganda (St. Joseph's, Kitgum Government, Kalongo, Lacor and Gulu Government). These hospitals have acted as an important source of safer sleeping conditions for thousands of night commuters.<sup>39</sup>

In August 2004, AVSI began carrying out periodic assessments on the number of school-age children commuting to sleep in St. Joseph's Hospital each night. From this work, which reflects an average of 2,500 school-age children each night, a small library program was started within the hospital. The program, run by volunteers, student-helpers and AVSI staff, carries out two core activities. A daily afternoon program targets the long-term child patients in the hospital. The children (an average of 20 each week) are read to and helped with school lessons. The second program, which runs Monday through Saturday evenings, is an open library for school-age children and night commuters. Staff and volunteers read books with the children, play games, review school lessons and sing songs. Between 150 and 250 children come to the library hour each night.<sup>40</sup>

### IRC

The IRC is conducting sensitization activities, targeting local authorities, leaders and community members. This includes issues of international humanitarian law, the Convention on the Rights of the Child's Optional Protocol on Children Affected by Armed Conflict, participatory rural appraisal and awareness raising around local authorities' responsibilities. IRC has established a network of peer educators who engage night commuters in life skills and recreational activities. The IRC is also striving to improve environmental health for night commuters by providing additional latrines at two shelters.



*More donors should work with night commuters to best assess the impact and gaps in their support. Dr. Michael Woods, T.D., Chairman of Ireland's Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, dances with night commuters at Noah's Ark in Gulu.*

The IRC also hopes to strengthen the community's capacity to protect night commuters through promoting community protection mechanisms. This includes training the local authorities in capacity building and protection, and mobilizing IDP camp protection committees.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, the IRC in partnership with UNICEF will conduct a situational analysis of gender-based violence.

### **Donor community**

During the Women's Commission's visit to Noah's Ark in Gulu, a delegation of Irish government officials was assessing funding impact and needs of the night commuter center. Heading the delegation was Dr. Michael Woods, T.D., Chairman of Ireland's Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs. He was actively engaged

with the director of the center and later joined in the organized activities for the night commuters.

International donors contributed approximately 53 percent of Uganda's 2003/04 expenditure.<sup>42</sup> The 2004 UN Consolidated Appeals Process totalled US\$ 142.8 million, of which \$104 million (72.8 percent) had been received as of October 19, 2004.<sup>43</sup> In a collective statement to the Ugandan government in May 2004, donors said too much is being spent on defense. "Defense spending rises by 19 percent to a proposed UGX 367 billion [US\$19.2 million] in 2004/05, after a 48 percent increase in the preceding two years. We are not yet convinced that these large increases in proposed defense spending are sufficiently justified."<sup>44</sup> Donors said that the Ugandan government needs to put more of its budget in social services and assistance to the north.

### **Community-based organizations and individual night commuters**

In a situation where too few people are committed to bringing relief to night commuters, night commuters themselves and concerned youth are actively involved in addressing their own protection concerns and needs. UNICEF reports that as a result of limited support to those sleeping under verandahs, the night commuters themselves have created their own informal policing and monitoring structure. Amongst themselves, the 5,000 verandah commuters determine sleeping arrangements and watch out as best they can for each others'

safety from outside intruders. UNICEF also reports that when asked why they sleep under the verandahs instead of within the unofficial centers, the night commuters explain that they feel freer from the control of administrators.<sup>45</sup>



*Youth leaders such as those in Watwero work with peers to develop strategies to raise awareness and protect night commuters. They are also valuable advocates with whom NGOs, the UN and GOU should invest time and resources.*

The night commuters themselves have created a night commuter association in Kitgum, which UNICEF describes as having a very participatory approach. The night commuter association works with NGOs and local government to ensure that decision-makers and assistance personnel are informed about what night commuters truly need and want. UNICEF explains however that the association is sometimes met with an authoritarian approach by district officials and administrators. UNICEF believes that more must be done to get the authorities to work in equal partnership with the night commuter association.<sup>46</sup>

Watwero continues to participate at the OCHA program coordination meetings where it provides a youth perspective. Furthermore, Watwero and a few other youth organizations continue to conduct investigations into the needs and concerns of night commuters, and conduct basic sensitization programming on HIV and GBV. Watwero trainers explain, however, that uncertainty over their own personal safety prevents them from being able to do all the programming they wish to do.

## **IV. Conclusions**

Currently there is much debate over whether or not the war in northern Uganda is coming to an end. Either way, the perception of insecurity amongst some of the displaced remains high, as made evident through the continued night commuter crisis. The humanitarian community, United Nations, donors, Ugandan civil society and the government of Uganda need to reenergize and strengthen their efforts to provide assistance and security throughout the region.

More tents are available to night commuters in Gulu and Kitgum Districts and overall night commuter numbers are down. NGOs have increased their assistance activities targeting night commuters in Kitgum since December 2003. The United Nations has strengthened its presence in the north and the potential UNICEF protection strategies to be implemented look promising. Nevertheless, even more must be done to address the ongoing violence and lack of adequate and clean sleeping spaces for night commuters.

As the international community and the GOU attempt to move forward, they must ensure that the Ugandan people maintain the key decision-making and implementing role. Those who wish to assist the displaced community must not assume to know what northern Ugandans want or need. The people most affected by this war should be the people deciding how they will be assisted, and the international community and the GOU must learn to listen. The efforts of community-based organizations should be supported financially and through capacity building. Despite the victimization the people of northern Uganda have suffered, many have responded with courage. These children, women and men are leaders and educators who face dangers everyday to provide a sense of hope to their community. There is much resilience amongst the people of northern Uganda. The international community and the government of Uganda's duty is to provide them with the support and security they ask for so that they can rebuild their homes and families.

## V. Recommendations

For a comprehensive list of recommendations to youth groups, the government of Uganda, humanitarian agencies and community leaders, please refer to *No Safe Place to Call Home: Child and Adolescent Night Commuters in Northern Uganda*. The following recommendations are additions developed in response to issues that were newly identified during the September 2004 mission.

### Recommendations to the GOU:

- ❑ **The GOU must hold police officials accountable for protection of night commuters and night commuter centers, ensuring that police arrive at their post in a timely manner, take their mandate of civilian protection seriously and are properly trained in human and child rights.**
- ❑ **The GOU should reexamine existing laws and rules that regulate military behavior and conduct.** The existing laws should be scrutinized to ensure that they match international standards, and where necessary, new codes of conduct should be established. The GOU should ensure that all government military personnel are trained in these codes of conduct and are held accountable to them.
- ❑ **The GOU should provide funding for electricity and water at night commuter centers and pay for staff to maintain the centers.**
- ❑ **District officials should strengthen their partnerships with community-based organizations, in particular night commuter associations.** District officials should assess the effectiveness of their partnership and communication with the community-based organizations to ensure that they foster a collaborative approach with community groups.
- ❑ **The GOU must provide adequate support to night commuters and displaced young people throughout northern Uganda, and not just focus its support on one or two districts.**

### Recommendations to humanitarian assistance agencies and shelter volunteers:

- ❑ **Humanitarian assistance agencies, government officials and security personnel should involve night commuters in decision-making processes that will affect their security and well-being.**
- ❑ **Humanitarian assistance agencies and the United Nations need to actively recruit and fund more protection officers with a human rights background.** The protection officers should be placed throughout the war-affected region of Uganda and should coordinate their strategies and activities. The protection officers should act as resources, advocates and monitors for the war-affected population.



- ❑ **Humanitarian assistance agencies and NGOs must not allow the GOU to abdicate its principal role and responsibilities to its own citizens.**
- ❑ **Humanitarian assistance agencies and NGOs should recruit and deploy more protection officers with human rights backgrounds throughout northern Uganda.** The protection officers should act as advocates and monitors for night commuters and other displaced youth.
- ❑ **Night commuter center volunteers and administrators must not abuse night commuters for any purpose. Regulation of night commuter centers should be conducted in a participatory style.** Volunteers and administrators should receive training in child rights. NGOs that fund or supervise centers should monitor the treatment of night commuters and provide them with a confidential and child-friendly reporting system.

### **Recommendations concerning rape:**

- ❑ **Shelter administration, NGO and government health and law enforcement officials should investigate the actual number of rapes occurring against night commuters. They should determine what security and societal gaps are allowing the rapes to occur and how best to prevent rape from happening.** The situation should be regularly monitored. Confidentiality and protection of survivors should be ensured during investigations and follow up actions. Survivors should be offered confidential testing and counseling.
- ❑ **Volunteers at night commuter centers should be trained in identifying rape survivors and providing a first line of confidential communication including recommending them for comprehensive clinical care and professional counseling.** Partnerships with professional psychosocial personnel and hospitals should be fostered.
- ❑ **Rape must end. Perpetrators of sexual violence must be punished. Community leaders should address rape by working with the community to reduce the stigma attached to survivors and educate men and boys on the role they can play to end rape.**

### **Recommendation to end the violence:**

- ❑ **The LRA must end its attacks on and abductions of civilians, particularly children and adolescents.** Civilians held by the LRA must be allowed to freely return to their communities.
- ❑ **The GOU and LRA should continue to explore a peaceful negotiation to end the conflict,** while at the same time take the necessary steps to reduce civilian casualties and abuse of children's rights as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Optional Protocol to the Convention on CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and further supported in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

## APPENDICES

### Acronyms

AJWS	American Jewish World Service
AVSI	Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale
CBO	Community-based organization
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department
GBV	Gender-based violence
GOU	Government of Uganda
GYFA	Gulu Youth for Action
IDP	Internally displaced person
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LC5	Local Council 5
LDU	Local defense unit
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OCHA	(UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RDC	Regional District Coordinator
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UGX	Ugandan shilling
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defense Forces

## **Sample questions asked of night commuters by youth and Women's Commission researchers**

- Are boys' and girls' sleeping facilities separate?
- What types of bedding facilities have been provided?
- Are there more or less or new shelters and latrines?
- Are night commuters leaving from home earlier or later or at the same time than a few months ago?
- What type of protection is there en route?
- What types of violence takes place within the sleeping space?
- What are the main problems you face as a night commuter?
- What do you need as a night commuter?

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> United Nations News Centre, “UN relief official spotlights world’s largest neglected crisis in northern Uganda,” *21 October 2004*, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=12297&Cr=uganda&Cr1=>
- <sup>2</sup> The principal international standard for determining who “children” are remains the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states in Article 1 that a “child” is “every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” Thus, note that national standards may differ. Additional chronological definitions provided by United Nations organizations that acknowledge differences in and overlap between and within childhood and adulthood are also instructive: Children: under 18; Adolescents: 10 to 19; Youth: 15 to 24; Young people: 10 to 24.
- <sup>3</sup> Global IDP Database, *Concerted military offensive by the National Army to fight rebels* (March 2002-2003), <http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/wViewCountries/9CD67FA54ED9EE13C1256D430049B894>
- <sup>4</sup> IDP Project: *Sources*: GoU, 11 November 2003, OCHA September, March, April 2003, OCHA April/May, June, July/August 2002, January/February 2002, February 2001, UN Humanitarian Coordination Unit (UNHCU) 24 January 2002, 14 July 2000, 20 December 2000, OCHA 23 October 1998.
- <sup>5</sup> According to the IDP Database, 70 percent of all Ugandans are under 25 years of age. UNAIDS estimates that 50 percent of the population in Uganda is under 15 years. <http://www.unaids.org/en/geographical+area/by+country/uganda.asp>
- <sup>6</sup> Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): Humanitarian Appeal 2005 for Uganda, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 11 Nov 2004. Night commuter statistics are continuously changing as a result of the changing level of insecurity in each district. Whereas no one knows the exact number of night commuters, perceptions of their decreasing numbers should not be used to reduce or dissuade material assistance and a government coordinated protection strategy to increase night commuter security en route to and within sleeping spaces. According to OCHA, the number of night commuters in Gulu, Kitgum and Kalongo towns reached a high of 52,000 in June 2004.
- <sup>7</sup> Both Watwero Rights Focus Initiative and Gulu Youth for Action were formed as a result of adolescent-designed and -led research and advocacy undertaken with the Women’s Commission beginning in 2000, in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee Uganda, World Vision Uganda and other partners. Young people from Pader District were also involved in the workshop in Kitgum, including members of the Pader Concerned Youth Association, a group also formed by former adolescent study researchers and youth coordinators, and the Youth Amalgamated Development Association (YADA). A representative from Luo Development Incorporated (LDI) also participated in the Gulu workshop. A report of the participatory action research undertaken previously by many of these and other young people with the Women’s Commission, *Against All Odds, Surviving the War on Adolescents in Northern Uganda*, (Women’s Commission, 2001), is available from the Women’s Commission’s website, [www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org). The Children and Adolescents Project section of the website also describes some of the follow-up advocacy undertaken with the young people in northern Uganda and outlines several policy and program improvements achieved in the region. Additional talking points about the current humanitarian crisis for IDP young people in northern Uganda are also available.
- <sup>8</sup> The Women’s Commission, with Watwero Rights Focus Initiative, Gulu Youth for Action and additional youth organizations, visited the following night commuter sites: in Kitgum: St. Joseph’s Mission Hospital (9/15/04), Kitgum Government Hospital (9/16/04), Kitgum Public School (9/17/04); in Gulu: Noah’s Ark(9/21/04).
- <sup>9</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, [www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm)
- <sup>10</sup> Falk, Lehnart; Jessica Lenz and Patric Okuma, *Sleepless in Gulu* May 2004; IRC Uganda-Kitgum, *Kitgum District Night Commuters Survey Report*, June 2004; UNOCHA, Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): Humanitarian Appeal 2005 for Uganda, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, November 2004; World Vision, *Pawns of Politics: Children, Conflict and Peace in Northern Uganda*, 2004.
- <sup>11</sup> Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): Humanitarian Appeal 2005 for Uganda, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 11 Nov 2004.
- <sup>12</sup> Women’s Commission interview, Deacon Omunkoiki, acting manger of Noah’s Ark Night Commuter Center, December 13, 2003
- <sup>13</sup> Women’s Commission interview, Rebecca (name has been changed to protect her identity and confidentiality), Volunteer, Charity for Peace Foundation Night Commuter Center, Gulu, northern Uganda, September 21, 2004.
- <sup>14</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup> Similar restrictions were in place at the IDP camps in Kitgum. All visitors and organizations were required to have written authorization from the Local Council 5 (LC5) or the Regional District Coordinator (RDC) to conduct any work in the camp. The Women’s Commission was not aware of this policy, but had acquired explicit verbal authorization from the LC5 to conduct its research at the Labuje IDP camp. Upon arrival at Labuje, the camp commander denied access to the Women’s Commission and youth representatives (of an unnamed youth organization to protect their capacity to conduct their work). The camp commander was informed that the LC5 had given verbal authorization but had not informed the Women’s Commission of a need for written permission. The director of the youth organization offered to telephone the LC5 so that he could explain to the camp commander that permission had been given. The camp commander rejected this offer. The camp commander asked the Women’s Commission and the youth organization to leave the camp.
- <sup>16</sup> Women’s Commission interview, Cornelius Williams, Protection Officer/Field Coordinator, UNICEF, Kitgum, northern Uganda, September 20, 2004.
- <sup>17</sup> IRC Uganda-Kitgum, *Kitgum District Night Commuters Survey Report*, June 2004
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks, OCHA, *Displaced children sleeping on streets in Kitgum town*, October 29, 2004.
- <sup>20</sup> Women’s Commission interview, four night guards, St. Joseph Mission Hospital, Kitgum, northern Uganda, September 15, 2004.
- <sup>21</sup> Cornelius Williams.
- <sup>22</sup> Women’s Commission interview, Helena Locateli, Education Advisor, AVSI, Kitgum, northern Uganda, September 19, 2004.
- <sup>23</sup> IRC report.
- <sup>24</sup> Cornelius Williams.
- <sup>25</sup> Helena Locateli.
- <sup>26</sup> The Women’s Commission and Watwero Rights Focus Initiative interviewed night commuters as well as officials working at the sleeping sites. Names and villages have been changed in some testimonies to protect their identity and confidentiality. The Women’s Commission did not have time to verify testimonies and further investigation is needed into the issue of GBV in Kitgum. Watwero Rights Focus Initiative has included sensitization trainings on HIV and GBV for night commuters. They are currently advocating to NGOs and medical staff to build a reliable system for reporting cases of rape and to provide psychosocial support for rape survivors. There are no well-established GBV assistance programs in Kitgum. The timing of incidents reported to the researchers and the Women’s Commission ranged from up to several months ago to within several days of the Women’s Commission mission.

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- <sup>27</sup> Rebecca.
- <sup>28</sup> For more information, read “Communication Skills in Working With Survivors of Gender-Based Violence: A Five-Day Training of Trainers Manual,” [www.rhrc.org](http://www.rhrc.org).
- <sup>29</sup> Women’s Commission interview, Ronald Opira, Watwero Director, Kitgum, northern Uganda, September 15, 2004.
- <sup>30</sup> Women’s Commission interview, Beatrice Okaka, Headmistress, Kitgum Public Primary School, Kitgum, northern Uganda, September 17, 2004.
- <sup>31</sup> See footnote 26.
- <sup>32</sup> See footnote 26.
- <sup>33</sup> IRIN, OCHA, *Displaced children sleeping on streets in Kitgum town*, October 29, 2004.
- <sup>34</sup> Women’s Commission interview, Cornelius Williams, Protection Officer/Field Coordinator, UNICEF, Kitgum, northern Uganda, September 20, 2004.
- <sup>35</sup> Read *No Safe Place to Call Home* to learn more about LDUs. The report is available at [www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org).
- <sup>36</sup> Women’s Commission interview, Lt. Oscar Mallinga, Political Civil Relationships Officer, UPDF, Kitgum, northern Uganda, September 20, 2004.
- <sup>37</sup> Women’s Commission interview, Deacon Omunkoikoi, acting manger of Noah’s Ark Night Commuter Center in December 2003, December 13, 2003.
- <sup>38</sup> Cornelius Williams and Joel Acaya. Curfew and perimeter information for Gulu was not assessed.
- <sup>39</sup> Email from Gina Bramucci, AVSI Uganda, November 10, 2004.
- <sup>40</sup> Gina Bramucci.
- <sup>41</sup> Email from Virginia Perez, Psychosocial Coordinator, IRC Uganda, November 11, 2004.
- <sup>42</sup> Orla Ryan, Uganda’s fight against poverty, BBC, Kampala, Uganda, Wednesday, 13 August, 2004 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/3134759.stm>
- <sup>43</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): Humanitarian Appeal 2005 for Uganda, 11 Nov 2004.
- <sup>44</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks. Donors reject proposed budget on grounds of defence spending, Kampala, Uganda, May 14, 2004. <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/573f12012e53174f85256e940052966c?OpenDocument>
- <sup>45</sup> Cornelius Williams.
- <sup>46</sup> Cornelius Williams.