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Hoping for peace, afraid of war: the dilemmas of repatriation and belonging on the borders of Uganda and South Sudan

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Introduction

This paper is about the reality of repatriation for Sudanese refugees in a context of political upheaval, a fluctuating security situation and a demanding economic environment.¹ After decades in exile, almost a quarter of a million officially registered refugees in Uganda and similar numbers of unregistered refugees are considering the prospect of returning to Sudan. And many have already done so. Based on interviews conducted with refugees and returnees in northern Uganda and South Sudan, this paper is about the lives of individual Sudanese people who are either still living in Uganda and might identify themselves as refugees, migrants, traders or a little bit of all three, or have returned to South Sudan after decades in exile.

Common throughout, and driving the process, is a strong desire to restore the roots, status and belonging that have been lost through exile. This group of Sudanese people have spent years or even decades in a protracted situation in which, until recently, all three durable were elusive for the majority. Despite the government of Uganda's generosity in giving considerable land to refugees, local integration has been impeded by the fact that refugee status and assistance has been dependent on living in settlements characterised by lack of freedom of movement, at least officially; resettlement numbers have been relatively low;² and repatriation only became a possibility with the signing of a peace deal between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the government of Sudan in 2005.

At the same time, it should be noted that many refugees in fact opted out of the settlement structure and have effectively created their own "durable solution" through a combination of economic and social integration within the Ugandan population, and ongoing movement in and out of Sudan, (what Van Hear refers to as "transnationalism").³ Yet in the absence of stability in Sudan or of the prospect of obtaining official Ugandan citizenship, legally their status remained vulnerable.⁴

The interviews sought to find out how people view the current process, and to see how it is happening in practice. The findings suggest that there are two processes taking place: the official process of repatriation whereby Sudanese refugees are being assisted to return to their homeland now that it has reached an officially acceptable level of stability; and the unofficial process comprised of the stories of individuals and families who are responding to a situation that holds both promise and threats to their safety and who are creating multiple coping strategies in order to maximise their protection in a context of chronic uncertainty. Sometimes these two processes converge and work together, and sometimes they run in parallel. And while the

¹ The author would like to thank Deirdre Clancy, International Refugee Rights Initiative, and Katy Long, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper. In addition, she would like to thank Joseph Okumu and Suzan Ombaru for their assistance with field research, and the UNHCR Uganda office, in particular the Adjumani office, for their assistance throughout the research, which was funded by the PDES small grants programme.

² Only one family was resettled by UNHCR in 2009; 30 families have identified as possible resettlement cases this year. (Conversation with UNHCR officers, 25 November 2010.)

³ N. Van Hear, "From Durable Solutions to Transnational Relations: Home and Exile among Refugee Diasporas." UNHCR New Issues in Refugee Research Working Paper Series, no. 83, 2003.

⁴ This scenario is echoed throughout the Great Lakes region where there is currently a massive push for repatriation. In particular Burundian and Rwandan refugees have come under increasing pressure to repatriate.

findings suggest that the official process does not jeopardise the unofficial process, the paper argues for greater suppleness in the case of the former, which would allow for better resonance between the two.

The convergence of the two processes lies in a shared understanding and motivation behind what is taking place: refugees and those working to assist refugees have a similar goal in mind, namely an end to exile. Ultimately, all want to create a situation in which refugees trade their refugee status for a re-activated citizenship. In this particular instance, there is also a shared awareness of the need to balance the competing realities of the opportunity to return following a peace deal, and the precariousness of the situation in Sudan. Therefore the official process of repatriation itself is characterised by a strong level of realism regarding potential renewed displacement, as evidenced by a notable degree of flexibility in the process and on ensuring the voluntary nature of return.

The differences lie primarily in priorities and in how to go about achieving this end: they lie in the process. The official process reflects an underlying supposition that repatriation is primarily a single course of action in one direction: a refugee leaves exile, crosses a border, returns to their home, and reaches a basic level of reintegration. As they cross the border, refugees shed their refugee status thereby becoming a person no longer of “concern” to the international community. Within this official process, repatriation *looks* like a primarily humanitarian enterprise.

This essentially humanitarian boxing of people and processes is often helpful in as much as refugees and returnees leverage the assistance it provides and, in this specific instance, it does no harm. But equally often the process is fundamentally at odds with the wider political and economic context and does not make sense of people’s survival strategies. At worst, it undermines people’s coping mechanisms: humanitarianism can all too easily take away autonomy in refugee decision-making processes, which effectively de-humanises the process and reduces the capacity for refugees to make wise decisions about when and how to return home. In other words, in trying to promote protection, narrow approaches to repatriation effectively limit or compromise it.

This paper therefore focuses primarily on the unofficial process of repatriation that is currently taking place – a process which, as Kaiser has said, many of the either/or categories (refugee and returnee; home and exile; migrant and forced migrant) are inadequate to deal with multiple and multi-faceted realities.⁵ It builds on a growing body of literature – and a growing awareness at a policy level⁶ – that is pushing for a broadening of the scope of repatriation as not only a humanitarian process, but one that is intimately connected with the political and economic context,⁷ whereby

⁵ Tania Kaiser makes the point that simple delineations between home and exile are inadequate for understanding displacement and refugee status. Tania Kaiser, 2010. “Dispersion, division and diversification: durable solutions and Sudanese refugees in Uganda.” *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 4, no. 1, March 2010, 44 – 60, p. 45.

⁶ See, for example, Katy Long, “Home Alone? A review of the relationship between repatriation, mobility and durable solutions for refugees.” UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, March 2010.

⁷ See Long, 2010. In addition, the author has developed this idea in the course of a broader research project exploring Citizenship and Displacement in the Great Lakes region, initiated by the International Refugee Rights Initiative in partnership with the Social Science Research Council: “Going Home or

repatriation is recognised as essentially about the restoration of the bond of citizenship: it is not about crossing a border – although that may be part of the process – but about a gradual process of restoring the political contract between citizens and the state that was broken prior to exile. It is a process of re-securing of citizenship – or *empatriation*⁸ – that negotiates the reconnection of the polity to the individual.

Furthermore, it is a process that is highly reliant on freedom of movement both within and between states. As Long asserts, in a context of repatriation and post-conflict reconstruction, “mobility offers a possible means to offset many of the weaknesses of physical return programmes by providing access to alternative social, economic and cultural resources outside of the state of origin that may benefit refugees, their families and communities, and their home state.”⁹

Ultimately this approach questions some of the assumptions that lie behind protection structures in the refugee context. As Lomo asserts, protection structures are not an end in themselves, but rather a means to ensure safety.¹⁰ And when they no longer protect, when they no longer provide safety, and when refugees vote with their feet (quite literally) for alternatives, then an honest appraisal of the status quo has got to be in order.

Methodology

The paper is based primarily on field research that took place in June and July 2010 in the Uganda/Sudan border area. In Uganda, research took place in the country’s West Nile region (which borders South Sudan to the north and eastern Congo to the west) and in and around two of the largest towns in the area, Arua and Adjumani. Adjumani and Arua (both towns within districts of the same name) are two of the major urban centres in Uganda’s West Nile region and are based in two of the districts that have hosted a high proportion of refugees from Sudan – both in settlements outside of the towns, and as self-settled refugees who have opted out of the settlement structure.

Staying Home: Ending Displacement for Burundian Refugees in Tanzania,” Working Paper no. 1, November 2008; “Two People Can’t Share the Same Pair of Shoes: Citizenship, Land and the Return of Refugees to Burundi.” Working Paper no. 2, November 2009; “Who Belongs Where? Conflict, Displacement, Land and Identity in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo”, Working Paper no. 3, March 2010; “A Dangerous Impasse: Rwandan refugees in Uganda.” Working Paper no. 4, June 2010.

⁸ Katy Long, 2008. “State, Nation, Citizen: Rethinking Repatriation.” Refugee Studies Centre Working Paper No. 48, Oxford, August, p. 35.

⁹ Long, 2010. See also Katy Long and Jeff Crisp, “Migration, mobility and solutions: an evolving perspective”, *Forced Migration Review* 35; Oliver Bakewell, “Repatriation and Self-settled Refugees in Zambia: Bringing Solutions to the Wrong Problems.” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2000, Vol. 13:4, 356-373; and “Keeping Them in Their Place: The ambivalent relationship between development and migration in Africa.” *Third World Quarterly*, 2008, Vol 29(7), 1341-1358; and Lucy Hovil and Moses Chrispus Okello, “The right to freedom of movement for refugees in Uganda.” In David Hollenbach (ed), *Refugee Rights: Ethics, Advocacy and Africa*. Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C. 2008.

¹⁰ Zachary Lomo, “Conceptualising protection as safety: A normative proposal.” Keynote address, ‘Protecting People in Conflict and Crisis: Responding to the Challenges of a Changing World’, Conference organised by Refugee Studies Centre and Humanitarian Policy Group, September 2009, (www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/PDFs/keynotepaperzacharylomo.pdf). See also Z.A. Lomo “The Concept of the International Protection of Refugees: Origins and Ideas”, paper in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Certificate of Postgraduate Study in Legal Studies and registration for the PhD Degree, University of Cambridge, 15 June 2007.

Given the somewhat arbitrary nature of the Uganda/Sudan border, there is considerable linguistic and cultural overlap between much of the Ugandan and Sudanese population. In addition, both areas are also notable for the fact that up to 80% of the Ugandan population was displaced to South Sudan during Uganda's civil war in the early 1980s.

Due to the fact that the research team could not obtain official permission to enter the settlements, the field research focused on Sudanese people living in Adjumani and Arua towns and the surrounding areas. This restriction created a natural bias in the data from the Uganda side, which is partly off-set by the fact that the paper also draws on the author's experience of conducting research with Sudanese refugees living in West Nile – both settlement-based and self-settled – between 2000 and 2008. In addition, many of those interviewed in Uganda had at one point either been living in, or had relatives in, the settlements. Interviewees were selected on the basis of their Sudanese nationality rather than on whether or not they identified themselves as refugees.

In Sudan, the field research focused on the area in and around Kajo-Keji in south Sudan's Central Equatoria region, where many of those who have been living in West Nile have returned to. It specifically interviewed returnees (a high percentage of the population), the majority of whom were living in proximity to trading centres. Different locations were selected to include both those who had been repatriated by UNHCR and those who had self-repatriated.

Altogether a total of 61 Sudanese people were interviewed. The interviews were loosely structured around an interview map that asked people about their understanding of repatriation; issues of property ownership; their understandings of citizenship; their perceptions of both the recent election and the forthcoming referendum; and the way in which they understand home and ideas of belonging. The majority of interviews were conducted in the vernacular (mostly Madi or Bari) and were then translated into English at the point of transcription. In addition, interviews were conducted with UNHCR and government officials in Kampala, Adjumani and Kajo Keji.

The interviews are by no means representative. There are as many experiences of displacement and return as there are Sudanese refugees/returnees. Likewise time did not permit for interviews to be conducted with Ugandans living in the areas that have hosted Sudanese refugees. The interviews simply provide a small indication of the sheer diversity and creativity of the way in which Sudanese refugees are ending their exile, and point to some of the complex ways in which people are (re)negotiating different forms of belonging in order to maximise safety for themselves and their families. And significantly, they represent the views of Sudanese people at varying points along the trajectory of repatriation and who are living on both sides of the border.

The context

There are two key contextual factors that need to be taken into consideration with regards to Sudanese repatriation from Uganda. First, the long history of movement

between the two countries that stretches from migratory movement to the current return process; and second, the political and security context in Sudan, past and present. Both are inextricably linked to the fact that Sudanese refugees in Uganda have been in what is generally called a protracted situation, and the length of time spent in exile, along with the historical linkages built up through decades of migratory movement, are important when discussing the meaning of repatriation for this group of refugees at a time of considerable uncertainty.

History of movement

Mass movements – whether forced or otherwise – have long been a phenomenon in the borderlands of northwest Uganda and southern Sudan.¹¹ This movement was only officially restricted and termed “cross-border” following the boundary agreement of 1914 between the British Protectorate of Uganda and the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium of Sudan. Since that time, civil conflicts both in Uganda and Sudan have continued to create forced migratory movement in addition to ongoing migration for trade and other purposes.¹²

After Sudan’s independence in 1956, Sudanese began to move to northern Uganda fleeing fighting in Sudan’s first civil war.¹³ This influx was temporarily halted by an agreement signed in Addis Ababa in 1972. But the trend in forced displacement was then reversed: events in Uganda following the seizure of power by Idi Amin in 1971 eventually led to Ugandans fleeing into southern Sudan, many to escape reprisals after the fall of both Milton Obote and Amin’s regimes. By the early 1980s there were 93,000 Ugandan refugees in southern Sudan.¹⁴

Ugandan refugees were eventually forced into returning to northern Uganda in the late 1980s as the fighting in southern Sudan once again intensified and their security was threatened. Most Ugandans remained refugees as long as they could, and only returned to Uganda when life became impossible in Sudan due to the civil war.¹⁵ They returned to a country that was trying to recover from years of civil strife, and a volatile security situation that has continued to be unpredictable with a number of rebel groups operating in the area including the notorious Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).¹⁶ Such threats continued throughout the 1990s, exacerbating notions of insecurity for the population.

¹¹ See, for example, Joseph Merkx, “Refugee identities and relief in an African borderland: a study of northern Uganda and southern Sudan.” UNHCR, *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Working Paper 19, June 2000.

¹² As Kaiser points out, the distinction between forced migrants, refugees and migrants is often hard to determine. Instead, she emphasises the intersection between forced migration and migration of other kinds. Tania Kaiser, 2010. “Dispersal, division and diversification: durable solutions and Sudanese refugees in Uganda.” *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 4, no. 1, March 2010, 44 – 60, p. 45.

¹³ This first period of civil conflict in Sudan is known as Anyanya I.

¹⁴ Tim Allen (ed.), “A Flight from Refuge” in, *In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight and Homecoming in the Northeast Africa*. London: James Currey, 1996, p. 225.

¹⁵ Allen 1996, p. 222.

¹⁶ These groups include the West Nile Bank Front, the Uganda National Rescue Front I and II, and the Lord’s Resistance Army. (See Lucy Hovil and Zachary Lomo, “Negotiating Peace: Resolution of Conflict in Uganda’s West Nile District.” Refugee Law Project Working Paper No. 12, June 2004.)

In addition to returnees arriving back in northern Uganda, there was soon a massive influx of Sudanese refugees fleeing from the renewed civil war in their own country. By July 1996, there were 244,780 refugees in Uganda, the vast majority of whom were southern Sudanese and were living in northern Uganda.¹⁷ After decades of insecurity, a peace process between the SPLM and the government of Sudan in 2005 led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which heralded the start for the process of return to South Sudan that is currently underway.

The process of return has to be understood in light of the experience of exile for this group of refugees which, for many, has spanned decades. Officially, durable solutions remained elusive for the vast majority of refugees throughout this time, with the government of Uganda remaining reluctant to allow refugees to legally integrate within the country and resettlement numbers low. The centrepiece of Uganda's refugee management approach, the "local settlement" – which, in theory, is supposed to be linked to local integration – has, in practice, had the opposite effect: officially, refugees have continued to have had restrictions placed on their freedom of movement, which has limited economic integration.

Despite the emphasis on self-reliance (under the official Self Reliance Strategy, which fits into UNHCR's wider global strategy of Development Assistance to Refugees),¹⁸ whereby each refugee family in the settlement was given a small plot of land for subsistence agriculture that was supposed to allow them to become self-reliant, research has shown that reaching a point of genuine self-reliance within the confines of the settlement has been a huge challenge.¹⁹

In addition, protection has also eluded many: attacks and the threat of attack has been a defining feature for many refugees, as well as for the Ugandan population throughout the north where a number of rebel groups have been operating following Museveni's assumption of power in 1986. Most notoriously, refugees living in Adjumani district (as well as Pader district further to the east) have suffered considerably from attacks by the LRA, which has been operating in northern Uganda and southern Sudan. Thus the insecurity and lack of safety that generated exile has continued to plague refugees regardless of international protection structures.

Due to the hardships, restrictions and inadequate security associated with living in settlements, and in defiance of the official structures, thousands of refugees in Uganda opted out of the settlement structure and "self-settled" amongst the national population – thereby finding their own "durable solution" albeit without official recognition. These self settled refugees have not been eligible for assistance within the Ugandan context: while many undoubtedly fall under the legal definition of a refugee, they have not been officially recognised at a national level.²⁰ For sure, many have

¹⁷ Kaiser, 2000, p. 38.

¹⁸ Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Lucy Hovil, "Local integration as a durable solution: refugees, host populations and education in Uganda," *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Working Paper No. 93, September 2003, UNHCR PDES.

¹⁹ See, for example, Eric Werker, "Refugees in Kyangwali settlement: Constraints on Economic Freedom." *Refugee Law Project Working Paper no. 7*, November 2002.

²⁰ Lucy Hovil, "Self Settled Refugees in Uganda: An Alternative Approach to Displacement?" *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20: 599 – 620, 2007. It is encouraging to note, however, that the Tripartite agreement signed in March 2007 governing the repatriation process specifically states that applications

reached a strong degree of integration at a local level – they pay taxes, own land, have married Ugandans. However, local belonging has always been vulnerable without Ugandan nationality to validate it. Others have creatively drawn upon the advantages of both: family members have remained in the settlements benefitting from assistance, while other members of the family have moved to nearby urban areas in order to seek work and supplement their income.²¹ And throughout, there has been constant movement in and out of Sudan.

The political and security context

After decades in exile, therefore, the possibility of returning to a stable Sudan offers huge hope. Indeed, the significance and meaning of repatriation for Sudanese refugees has to be understood in the context of Sudan's political history – a history dominated by conflict and the abuse of political power. Popular explanations, particularly within the media, describe conflict in Sudan as a “black African” versus “Arab” dichotomy. Differences between the two are seen to offer mono-causal explanations for widespread, extensive, drawn-out and extremely brutal violence within Sudan's borders. For sure, ethnic, racial and religious divisions play a strong role in past and current dynamics of conflict.²²

However, these antagonistic expressions of identity do not offer a complete explanation for current or past violence – after all, diversity does not automatically lead to violence. Likewise conflict over access to resources, both those that are diminishing and those more recently discovered, in particular oil, are also common explanations.²³ But although war economies clearly drive and sustain conflict, they also provide an incomplete justification for Sudan's multiple and recurring wars.

Instead, as de Waal states, violence stems from “the more fundamental problem of a state that is struggling to be financially viable and politically cohesive. Indeed... the very brutality of the war is a product of the inability of the state to maintain effective control of the means of violence.”²⁴ This lack of state control is further reinforced by deep divisions between the centre and the peripheries in Sudan, with about half of the nation's income and assets in the capital, Khartoum, making Sudan “one of the most unequal countries in the world.”²⁵ The late John Garang, former leader of the SPLA/M, emphasised this unequal distribution of power as a primary grievance that generated war between the North and South.²⁶

for Ugandan citizenship by “refugees remaining in Uganda after the repatriation provided for in this Agreement” shall be “given especially favourable consideration and priority” (article 6, clause 2 d).

²¹ Lucy Hovil, “Free to Stay, Free to Go? Movement, Seclusion and Integration of Refugees in Moyo District.” Refugee Law Project, Working Paper No. 4, May 2002. The paper demonstrates the contrasting experiences of exile between self-settled and settlement-based Sudanese refugees who were living in Uganda.

²² De Waal, for instance, writes of how Sudan lacks “unifying national symbols” – which, in turn, undermines notions of any form of coherent or meaningful national identity – and the fact that while different identities might not have caused war, they have certainly become polarised as a result of it. Alex de Waal, 2007. “Sudan: What kind of state? What kind of crisis?” Crisis States Research Centre and LSE, Occasional Paper no. 2, April, p. 2 – 5.

²³ De Waal, 2007, p. 8.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 9.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

²⁶ Ibid.

The longest standing conflict in the country since its independence has been between the geographical south of the country and the central government – with the latter generally referred to as the North. The first war, which began in 1962 and is commonly known as the Anya Nya war, officially ended in 1972 with the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement. Although the agreement asserted that the South would become a self-governing region, after eleven years it fell apart – not least as a result of the discovery of oil in the South and growing fears among Southerners that Khartoum’s increasing ties with Arab governments in the early 1980s would lead to an Arab Islamic state.²⁷

War broke out again in 1983 between the SPLA/M and the national government. Initial attempts to end the war through negotiations were finally thwarted in 1989 when a coup, led by Muslim officers within the army ended any attempts at peace.²⁸ Meanwhile, increasing factionalism within the SPLA led to two major groups based originally on two competing ideas: the ideology of separatism versus unity. The two “sides” increasingly took on an ethnic profile, portrayed as a Nuer-Dinka conflict.²⁹ A number of ineffective agreements and charters were signed,³⁰ but the conflict only became increasingly complex and entrenched, not least with increasing fragmentation in the South.

This impasse was finally broken in 2001, and a serious peace process began, culminating in the signing of the CPA on 9 January 2005. While the peace deal signifies the most promising end to the war to date, its implementation has proved a huge challenge, not least given the ongoing conflict in Darfur and the fact that President Bashir has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for his alleged role in that conflict. Although a recent election (11 – 15 April 2010) managed to take place without significant bloodshed, the process itself was allegedly far from free and fair.³¹

Regardless, since the signing of the CPA, approximately 2 million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to South Sudan. The scale and scope of return is enormous as people return in what has been described as “an impoverished and ill-prepared social and economic post-war environment.”³² It is

²⁷ The South’s position had been further weakened when the then President Nimeiri restored diplomatic relations with the US following the successful quashing of a pro-Communist coup in 1971: the US viewed Nimeiri’s government as a “regional counterweight” to Soviet-backed Ethiopia and Libya. (D. Johnson, 2003, *The Root Causes of Sudan’s Civil Wars*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington Johnson, 2003, p. 84 – 85, p. 54.)

²⁸ Ibid, p. 84 – 85.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 114 – 115.

³⁰ These included the Frankfurt Agreement of 1992 between the Nasar faction and Khartoum, which allowed for a future referendum to decide the “special political and constitutional status” of the South; and the Peace Charter in 1994 between Riek Machar and Bashir, which “affirmed the unity of the Sudan within its known boundaries, the federal system of the NIF (with its 26 states), and *Shari’a* as the source of legislation. Against this was a promise at the end of an unspecified period for a referendum for Southerners to ‘determine their political aspirations’”; and a peace agreement signed on 21 April 1997 which reinforced the Peace Charter. (Johnson, 2003)

³¹ See, for instance, the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, “Shifting through Shattered Hopes: Assessing the Electoral Process in Sudan.” May 2010.

http://www.acjps.org/Publications/Reports/2010/Assessing_Elections_in_Sudan.pdf

³² Overseas Development Institute, HPG. “The Long Road Home: The Challenges of Reintegration for Returnees to Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.” Phase II, 2008.

estimated that up to 80% of South Sudan's population have been displaced at least once over the previous fifteen years³³ and the challenge this presents to a region recovering from decades of civil war, and whose political status hangs in the balance, cannot be exaggerated. In addition to tensions between returnees and those who stayed,³⁴ widespread lack of civilian protection, weak police capacity, and incomplete civilian disarmament processes constitute a context that is highly precarious.³⁵

Furthermore, the return process is clearly linked to the wider political processes of peace-building, census taking, national elections and, most significantly, a referendum on secession. The referendum, due to take place on January 11 2011, will allow those in the South to vote on whether they want to remain unified with the rest of Sudan, or secede. All those living in South Sudan who can prove their status as Southerners are officially allowed to vote – hence the strong push for repatriation. Indeed, the South Sudan government recently announced plans to bring home 1.5 million displaced southerners from the north in time to vote in the referendum in January, according to government sources, under a plan called “Come home to choose”.³⁶ With half the population who are currently in South Sudan having recently received food aid, the impact this will have on resources is of huge concern.³⁷

Secession is widely believed to be the most likely outcome of the referendum. Yet whether the referendum will take place as planned, whether the government in Khartoum will accept the outcome, whether the border disputes along what would become Africa's longest intra-state border will be resolved,³⁸ and whether a potential new state of South Sudan can become politically coherent enough to rule, all remain to be seen.

The official repatriation process

In spite of these seismic political changes that are underway, the official repatriation of Sudanese refugees from Uganda began in 2006 following a tripartite agreement between UNHCR, Sudan, and Uganda.³⁹ Since then, sensitisation has taken place within the settlements – “Go and See Visits” and “Come and Inform Visits” carried out by government of Uganda and South Sudan officials as well as UNHCR⁴⁰ – encouraging refugees to register for repatriation. Unofficially, refugees have been

³³ J. Phelan and G. Wood, “An Uncertain Return: Report on the current and potential impact of displacement people returning to southern Sudan.” Ockenden International: Surrey, UK, January 2006, p. 14.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 40 – 42. See also ODI, 2008, p. 13.

³⁵ Human Rights Watch, “Southern Sudan: Protect Civilians, Improve Rule of Law.” February 12 2009, <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/02/12/southern-sudan-protect-civilians-improve-rule-law>

³⁶ Reuters, 24 August 2010. “South Sudan intends to bring home 1.5 million referendum voters. (Found at <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/MCD457478.htm>, 15 September 2010)

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ See, for instance, a recent report by Concordis International, “More than a line: Sudan's North-South border.” September 2010.

³⁹ Sudanese refugees from Uganda prepare to go home, News Stories, 26 April 2006 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=444f9d214>

⁴⁰ Two of the former and one of the latter have taken place in 2010. (Email correspondence with UNHCR official, 22 November 2010.)

moving in and out of Sudan throughout exile, so many know the situation. Family members are allowed to choose to return at different points.⁴¹

At the point of return, refugees are allowed 50 kgs per person, and are allowed to take their livestock with them, except for cows, due to logistical constraints.⁴² Before boarding a convoy to go to Sudan, they hand over their refugee attestations and ration cards. They indicate their place of origin to UNHCR and, based on this destination, are assigned to one of the repatriation convoys that go up to one of the reception sites in Sudan (of which Kajo Keji is one).

Here they receive three months of food rations, non food items (NFIs), a reintegration cash grant of \$50 per person (paid in Sudanese pounds), information on mine clearance, and a travel grant based on the distance to their final destination. They then arrange for their travel independently. More recently, the idea of Facilitated Group Return is being promoted within the settlements, whereby refugees from the same local area in South Sudan agree to return in a group, and the UNHCR office in South Sudan provides them with livelihood support such as tailoring, oxen and ox ploughs, or rental of tractors plus seeds and tools.⁴³

Estimates indicate that 170,000 officially registered Sudanese refugees were living in Uganda in early 2006 following the official end of the 21-year civil war in Sudan.⁴⁴ The figure including those who opted to self-settle is likely to have been considerably higher. Between May 2006 and May 2007 UNHCR assisted 13,000 Sudanese refugees in returning home from Uganda.⁴⁵ Then, on May 16, 2007, UNHCR reached another tripartite agreement with Sudan and Uganda to initiate efforts to repatriate an additional 120,000 refugees to the Eastern Equatoria state in South Sudan.⁴⁶ During the same meeting of the tripartite commission, UNHCR and representatives of the Sudanese and Ugandan governments pledged to push the repatriation programme forward at a faster pace.⁴⁷

By March 2010, only 20,301 registered Sudanese refugees remained in the camps.⁴⁸ Since that time, return has slowed down as the referendum has become increasingly imminent. Those who have remained in Uganda and are registered in the settlements continue to be recognised as refugees (in the absence of the application of the cessation clauses) and continue to have ongoing access to assistance, albeit at a reduced level due to funding constraints.⁴⁹

⁴¹ Email correspondence with UNHCR official, Adjumani office, 23 November 2010.

⁴² Refugee Law Project, "Repatriation Exercise in Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement, Arua District." Briefing Paper, April 2007.

⁴³ Email correspondence with UNHCR official, Adjumani office, 22 November 2010.

⁴⁴ In addition, approximately 358,000 Sudanese refugees had fled to neighbouring countries, including Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. "Accord allows return of south Sudan's refugees in Uganda," UN agency says, UN News Centre, 27 March 2006, available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=17955>

⁴⁵ UNHCR, *Some 120,000 Sudanese refugees set to return to Eastern Equatoria*, News Stories, 16 May 2007,

[http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=464b153e4&query=Tripartite agreement Uganda Sudan](http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=464b153e4&query=Tripartite%20agreement%20Uganda%20Sudan)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ UNHCR, Uganda statistics, March 31 2010.

⁴⁹ RLP, 2007.

Meanwhile, self-settled refugees have not formally changed their legal status (a status that has always been ambiguous due to the somewhat contradictory situation whereby, at a national level refugee status is contingent upon being registered and living in a settlement, while under international protection structures they have been entitled to *prima facie* refugee status), although as the interviews demonstrate, many are now presenting themselves as no longer refugees – a striking contrast with previous research when it was rare to meet a Sudanese person living in Uganda who did not identify themselves as a refugee.⁵⁰ Access to Ugandan citizenship, however, still remains elusive.⁵¹

Despite the fact that the repatriation process continues to move forward, there is a strong awareness of the fact that repatriation is taking place in a context in which the current process of transition from war to stability remains extremely fragile, and is likely to come to a head one way or the other in the referendum. As stated above, while it is widely accepted that the vote will be in favour of secession, what remains unclear is whether or not this will lead to greater stability or will once more return the country to war. This uncertainty has put the repatriation into something of a catch-22 situation: on the one hand, if people do not return home then they will not be part of the political changes that are (hopefully) creating potential for durable peace; and yet by returning home into a context of chronic uncertainty, people risk jeopardising their security should the situation deteriorate once more.

From the perspective of UNHCR, this reality is acknowledged: it has meant balancing the desire not to undermine the referendum process (which, after all, is highly dependent upon refugees from all over the region returning to South Sudan in order to vote and legitimise the process) while remaining mindful of the potentially precarious nature of repatriation, as evidenced by the fact that settlement land is remaining gazetted should it once more be needed.⁵²

Yet at the same time, the fact that a massive (and expensive) repatriation process is taking place in a context of such enormous uncertainty remains troubling for all involved. This same dilemma is faced by refugees: they want to return home and be part of this change, and yet they want to keep their options open and protect their families and livelihoods. They are not being forced home – many *want* to go home. It is just that they are responding to this uncertainty differently and are going about return in a different way.

At the root of this dilemma is the fact that the concept of citizenship, which, as argued above, lies at the heart of genuine repatriation, is in a massive state of flux. Indeed, Sudan is not just in a situation of post-conflict reconstruction: it represents a context in which the entire polity is changing. On the one hand, the current political processes present the opportunity for those living in the South to be rid of a profoundly unjust system of power that has been fundamentally exclusive by nature and instead to participate in the polity of a new state. As such, it represents a potential end to

⁵⁰ See, for example,

⁵¹ “Despite the fact that Ugandan law clearly entitles refugees to citizenship if they meet the applicable requirements (primarily residence for 20 years), immigration authorities have yet to abide by the legislation.” Simon Walker, “From refugee to citizen? Obstacles to the naturalisation of refugees in Uganda.” Fahamu Refugee Legal Aid Newsletter, Issue 7, September 2010.

⁵² Interview with Country Representative, UNHCR, Kampala, 2 June 2010.

marginalisation – both within Sudan and as exiles in another country. Yet on the other, that very transition is itself a threat to security should it unravel. As a result, those who are returning are at once hopeful of the potential that repatriation holds, and scared of the ramifications if that process should fail. As history has shown, it is always important to have a contingency plan.

It is this dilemma – portrayed primarily through the eyes of refugees and returnees – that forms the basis for this paper. The findings are presented in two main sections. First, the paper outlines the way in which refugees are going about ending displacement, either through return to Sudan or through re-negotiating their stay in Uganda. Second, it examines the ways in which refugees/returnees see themselves in relation to notions of belonging throughout this process, and how this, in turn, is impacting their ability to secure their rights and maximise their safety.

The process of repatriation

In practice, return is happening in multiple ways. For some it has taken place through officially repatriating to Sudan with the assistance of UNHCR; for others it means returning to Sudan by their own means – or a bit of both; and for others it means staying in Uganda – either temporarily or permanently. Common throughout was a recognition of the need for refugees/returnees to have unbroken access to livelihoods. As outlined above, at an official level, this translates into a humanitarian process whereby a family registers for repatriation, packs up their belongings and returns to Sudan on a truck provided by UNHCR and receives three months of rations at the return location. Although reception sites continue to be managed by UNHCR for a limited period of time, resources are typically inadequate and there is minimal capacity for follow-up after return.⁵³

Unofficially, however, a far broader and more flexible process is taking place. People were certainly appreciative of the official repatriation process and there were no complaints or indications that people felt in any way coerced into returning; indeed, “spontaneous repatriation” is only encouraged, and this particular repatriation exercise is certainly characterised by its flexibility.

Yet the stories of those who are living through the process give insight into the way in which, in practice, people are ending their exile in multiple creative ways so as to minimise loss of livelihoods, ensure that their children have ongoing access to education, allow for healthcare and other basic needs to be met, and create a contingency should war once more break out in South Sudan. Indeed, what was perhaps most striking about the data, was the number of people who had chosen to forgo free assistance in order to prioritise a different approach to repatriation – or, in other cases, go to great lengths to work around the system.

⁵³ This was clearly evident, for instance, in research conducted in Burundi with recent returnees. See IIRI 2009.

Geographical spread

One key characteristic of the unofficial return process was the extent to which return is made up of multiple journeys in multiple directions. In fact, striking throughout the data was the extent to which families spread themselves out geographically – either within Uganda or Sudan, between the two countries, or in some cases, further afield. In doing so, they are building on the experience of exile: despite restrictions on freedom of movement for those living in the settlements, there is ample research to show that most refugees have been highly mobile, especially those who opted to self-settle. This mobility has merged with a process of return whereby the balance has shifted: rather than living primarily in Uganda with occasional visits to Sudan, people's centre of gravity has moved to Sudan.

In Uganda, for instance, Sudanese people who would have identified themselves as refugees a few years ago now see themselves as repatriated to Sudan but living in Uganda. For some, this geographical spread is temporary: people are waiting for Sudan to become more secure before they commit their whole family to returning, or they have left some of the family in Uganda while the children complete their education. For others, it is seen as a more durable option whereby people intend to maintain a presence in Uganda indefinitely.

As one young man currently living in Arua said: “In 2008 we were repatriated with my parents, but I remained here with my two sisters and brother for education reasons. My parents are in Sudan, some of my family members are still in Kenya which is where we first fled to, and some have been resettled to the US. We are here purely just living here like any other Ugandan, not as refugees.”⁵⁴ A grandmother told of how she had returned to Sudan with the official repatriation process and then come straight back to Uganda to look after her grandchildren who are still in school. She talked of how she is no longer a refugee, and identified herself as a Bari from Sudan.⁵⁵ Likewise in Sudan, people talked of how they regularly return to Uganda to access resources, education and businesses that they still own.

These stories point to the fact that the ability for families and communities to spread out geographically, rather than be collected, moved and relocated to a single location, allows them to maintain their assets, leave their children to complete their education while they set up home in Sudan, and allow for sick relatives to have ongoing access to healthcare in Uganda. This is possible counter-intuitive from a humanitarian point of view: there is a strong, and right, emphasis on maintaining family unity⁵⁶ at the point of repatriation. Yet in practice, families recognise that spreading out might be the best means to ensuring their protection, however hard it might be.

⁵⁴ Interview with young Sudanese man, Arua, 10 August 2010.

⁵⁵ Interview with elderly woman, Arua, 8 August 2010.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Article 6, clause 1 of the Tripartite Agreement among the Government of Uganda, the Government of Sudan and UNHCR, March 27 2007, Kampala, which explicitly states that every effort should be made “to preserve the principle of family unity” in the process of repatriation.

A process over time

Inextricably linked to this geographical dispersal is the extent to which repatriation was seen as a process that takes place over time, and not as a one-off event. Rather than return being characterised as a one-way ticket home, this gradual (and often partial) process of return makes sense in a context of huge uncertainty, and minimises the shock if new displacement happens. As with multiple locations, it allows people to continue to access education and health care facilities in Uganda in a context of chronic infrastructural challenges in South Sudan. Indeed, education and healthcare were regularly cited as reasons for partial or gradual return – or for staying in Uganda indefinitely.

A former SPLA soldier now based in Kajo-Keji, described how he is returning to Sudan. In 2007 he came to take a look at his land and started building a house. In 2008 he came and started to farm his land, and in 2009 he brought some of his family back. He has avoided official repatriation because he wants to keep his refugee registration: “I am here temporarily; I am still monitoring the situation. In case of any war, I will have the opportunity to return to the settlement as a refugee. Some of my family are still there and they will only come back after the referendum if it goes well.”⁵⁷ Only then will he transfer the rest of his property. Or as a woman told us, “My husband came first as we were preparing to return and built a house here. Then he came for me and the rest of the family. So when I arrived, we just entered in this house.”⁵⁸

Moving house, a stressful experience under any circumstances, is particularly traumatic when there is literally no house to move to. This gradual process of return allows people to plan ahead and minimise risk to their families: rather than the entire family getting on a truck in the camp and arriving in a new location *en masse*, it allows for a careful process of planning and gradual repatriation. As one man now living back in Sudan said, “I was the first to come back, followed by my brother. I first built near the main road. At that time I had to get everything I needed from Moyo. I started by sleeping under the mango tree here while I was making bricks to build and my wife was cutting grass.”⁵⁹

Of course, this staggered process is dependent on being part of a wider family group and, in most cases, on being able to draw on assets built up in Uganda. One man, who had been registered in the camps but had been living in Adjumani town, told of how he was able to benefit both from the official repatriation exercise and from the resources he had earned in town: “There was enough space to carry all our properties and UNHCR did not put any restrictions on them – only for the animals, we had to get a letter of transfer from OPM. And then I was also able to bring with me two bicycles I bought with money I earned in town.”⁶⁰

Having leveraged official assistance in the settlements at the same time as using his skills to earn money outside of the settlements during exile, it is only logical that he should have done the same at the point of return. Likewise a woman talked of how she

⁵⁷ Interview with Sudanese man, Kajo Keji, 16 August 2010.

⁵⁸ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 16 August 2010.

⁵⁹ Interview with Sudanese man, Kajo Keji, 22 August 2010.

⁶⁰ Interview with Sudanese man, Kajo-Keji, 17 August 2010.

had brought a sewing machine with her, bought with money her husband had earned as a self-settled refugee while she had been living in the settlement.⁶¹

However, for some refugees, particularly those who have been living exclusively in the settlements, there has been less flexibility and choice. A woman in Kajo-Keji talked of how their own return has been helped by the fact that they have been moving in and out of Moyo⁶² regularly since returning and drawing on contacts and resources there – they still own a small business. But, as she added, “those who are repatriated [by UNHCR] and who have been living in the settlements are the ones who get a lot of problems because they only come with the food provided for them. Those who are self-repatriated tend to have enough resources so they can sustain themselves for some time... Since we came we are now settled and have things like cassava. But other people are still facing hunger. It all depends on how you planned for your return.”⁶³

In other words, those who did not have family members outside of the settlements have had to repatriate within the configuration of the official UNHCR repatriation process and were struggling more than those who had been self-settled. They have not been able to “plan their own return” and, as a result, are battling within the confines of available resources. Three months of food rations are certainly helpful, but ultimately only palliative as a solution to ensuring ongoing access to livelihoods that have been completely ruptured by their move. It demonstrates that the experience of exile has a considerable impact on the experience of return – the choices and freedom, or lack thereof, continue to be a key contributor to people’s coping mechanisms.

Therefore, allowing for the possibility for refugees to maintain their fields in Uganda while starting to grow crops in Sudan, and allowing for one or two family members to return first to build a house while leaving the rest of the family in their house in the settlement, or encouraging parents to return while their children remain in boarding school in Uganda or under the care of a relative, makes much more sense than relocating the entire family at once. While, in practice, this is happening – and the official process is certainly not hindering it from taking place and, indeed, allows families to repatriate in stages – in a context of dwindling resources, not only should this gradual return process be tolerated, it should be explicitly encouraged as it allows for people to plan for when the three months of food rations run out.

Eluding categorisation

As stated above, although the official process has not prevented this process of gradual return from taking place – either as a result of people returning without assistance, or returning and then unofficially going back to Uganda – an underlying concern that people expressed was the extent to which the official process robbed them of their refugee status and, therefore, made them feel more vulnerable should circumstances deteriorate in Sudan.

⁶¹ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 17 August 2010.

⁶² Another town in West Nile, right on the border with Sudan, where considerable numbers of refugees have been living – both in settlements and as self-settled refugees.

⁶³ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 22 August 2010.

The official repatriation process is premised on the notion that, at the point of return, a person sheds their legal status as a refugee and once more takes up the protection of the state from which they fled. Indeed, the entire UNHCR structure revolves around this either/or legal status: when someone registers for repatriation and then officially leaves the settlement, they effectively give up their refugee status as symbolised (certainly in the minds of refugees) by handing over their ration card.⁶⁴

Yet within this gradual process of return – over both time and space – official legal categories rarely match realities on the ground. And while on the one hand people were well aware that they would once more be able to flee to Uganda should Sudan return to civil conflict, there was a strong desire not to have to start from scratch once more at the point of renewed displacement. In other words, they want to keep their options open both in terms of location and in terms of their status. Being both a refugee and a returnee simultaneously through an uncertain transition is what best makes sense.

As a result, many refugees are opting out of returning under the official repatriation exercise (which would mean that they would have to officially register for repatriation and, therefore, begin the process of losing their refugee status) and instead are returning on their own – but leaving behind a relative or two in the settlements in order to keep their refugee status somehow active (and their settlement home intact). Many of those interviewed in Sudan said that they had “walked home” rather than used the official repatriation process in order to maintain their registration in the settlements: “I just decided to walk home. I have left my refugee card in Uganda. In case I need it, I will go back there.”⁶⁵

These multiple levels of status are being used as a contingency plan as people negotiate their way through an uncertain transition. By way of an example, a Sudanese woman living in Adjumani told us her story. She met her Ugandan husband when he was a refugee in South Sudan in the early 1980s. As a family they then fled from fighting between the government of Sudan and the SPLA in 1988 – including some of his (Ugandan) family who had never returned to Uganda – and both husband and wife registered as refugees in Uganda and went to live in the settlement.

They then left the settlement because of LRA attacks and settled in Adjumani town. Both her and her husband (who is still, technically, Ugandan) intend to “repatriate” to Sudan once there are better medical facilities available (her husband is sick), leaving their children in Uganda to finish their schooling.⁶⁶ As another interviewee, a man now living in Kajo-Keji, said, “We have been moving up and down [between Moyo and Kajo Kejo] throughout. It is just that now we are based here.”⁶⁷ This overlap in status – not only between refugee and migrant but also between Sudanese and Ugandan nationality – is striking, characterised by varying degrees of refugee-ness.

⁶⁴ In fact refugee status under the 1951 and 1969 Convention is deemed to have officially ceased when a refugee, inter alia, voluntarily re-avails him or herself of the protection of the state of origin (article 1 C (1) of 1951) or voluntarily re-establishes him or herself there (article 1 C (4)).

⁶⁵ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 18 August 2010.

⁶⁶ Interview with Sudanese woman, Adjumani, Uganda, 2 August 2010.

⁶⁷ Interview with Sudanese man, Kajo Keji, 16 August 2010.

Others have remained in Uganda and are waiting for the outcome of the referendum before they move. The majority think there is a strong possibility that Sudan will once more return to war. “Many [Sudanese] people here are thinking about war because northerners will not allow the south to be independent from them because of the resources in the south like oil and minerals.”⁶⁸

The fact that UNHCR has not closed the settlements as they become emptier but is keeping them open for such a scenario echoes these concerns.⁶⁹ Yet there was a strong realisation that once resettled from the camps, returning to them would mean starting all over again – having to once more negotiate coping strategies that had been formed over years or decades.

In addition, others either do not want to return or feel that they are not able to return. One woman spoke of how she feels stigmatised by the fact that her husband, who is now dead, was a government of Sudan soldier. When asked what rights her Sudanese nationality gives her she said: “The only rights I have as a Sudanese is being assisted by UNHCR as a refugee here. There is no right I have in Sudan because my husband and his brothers worked for the army and the Southern Sudan government looks on us as sympathisers and supporters of the enemy.”⁷⁰

Another woman, whose husband has left her, feels she cannot return to Sudan because she has lost family ties: “I am the only surviving member in our family and I do not know my clan members. Therefore I cannot go back to Sudan... But here I am with other Madi, so I can stay here.”⁷¹ Whether or not the political environment will enable her to stay in Uganda remains to be seen, and shows the need for Ugandan citizenship to be a considered alternative.

This section has outlined some of the different ways in which individuals and families are going about the process of ending exile. It emphasises the mobility, process and multiple locations in which people are living their lives during a time of massive change. It sheds light on a process that is not only taking place now, but is building on years of experience in exile of managing livelihoods and seeking safety in a highly challenging environment.

Indeed, these stories demonstrate the extraordinary creativity of a group of refugees who, despite massive odds against them, have shown levels of resourcefulness that not only need to be recognised, but that point to a blueprint for future refugee assistance programmes: programmes that are genuinely driven by refugees themselves rather than by assistance structures. It underlines the extent to which allowing refugees to repatriate gradually over time and location and to make decisions about their own security and livelihoods enhances their protection as it builds in contingency planning.

Ultimately, it points to the need for a greater period of transition between refugee and non-refugee status. Refraining from closing down the settlements (which, in practice, means maintaining the land’s gazetted status) is the first step to recognising the

⁶⁸ Interview with Sudanese woman, Adjumani, 2 August 2010.

⁶⁹ Interview with UNHCR Country Representative, Kampala, June 2010.

⁷⁰ Interview with Sudanese woman, Adjumani, Uganda, 2 August 2010

⁷¹ Interview with Sudanese woman, Adjumani, 1 August 2010.

precariousness of the situation, but more needs to be done. This might include, for instance encouraging refugees to (temporarily) maintain their land or houses and to leave family members while others partially repatriate. Such greater flexibility in the process would better reflect what is, in reality, taking place.

Repatriation and belonging

The official repatriation process is theoretically designed to assist refugees to return home and once more gain access to livelihoods and other rights as citizens in their country, and ultimately, reintegrate. It is designed to protect refugees as they make this transition. Yet as the section above has demonstrated, the way in which this is configured on the ground does not always best enable this outcome and lead to genuine protection.

One of the main reasons for this disjuncture is the fact that the either/or categories that form the basis of a one-off repatriation process between two locations (the camp and the point of return) do not make sense in a context in which, in practice, people are having to negotiate a complex process of belonging – a process with multiple contextual factors that need to be taken into consideration. In order to accommodate these realities, repatriation needs to be viewed as a gradual transition over a number of years that allows for people to gradually re-negotiate their ability to belong at both a local and national level.

The need to legitimise their status at both of these levels was acknowledged throughout the interviews, and was a major factor in how people were going about the process of return. For instance when asked how they identify themselves, people often referred to both the language they spoke (and/or a cultural defining feature), and to their Sudanese voter cards: “When I return I will prove my nationality by the language I speak. I identify myself by the people who knew me, my clan mates, and I also have my national identify card.”⁷² A Zande woman said, “I identify myself with the way we plait our hair, with my skin, the language I speak and my national identity card.”⁷³ Or as one woman who recently returned to Kajo Keji said, “I have my voter’s card which indicates my nationality and the region I come from. I believe that’s enough to help me identify myself as a citizen of this country. But also here I speak the same language [Kuku] and share the same culture which has bound us together.”⁷⁴

Repatriation therefore revolves around the demands of these different levels of belonging: re-securing Sudanese citizenship is challenging if not impossible if you do not have a community to connect with in a context of enormous economic hardship and looming insecurity; and local belonging is precarious if it is not supported by national legitimacy – as has been the case throughout exile. Both local and national levels (and multiple layers therein) of inclusion are therefore critical. How this works out in practice, however, is highly complicated and goes well beyond the constraints of a one way ticket home.

⁷² Interview with Sudanese man, Arua, 9 August 2010.

⁷³ Interview with Sudanese woman (widow), Arua, 9 August 2010.

⁷⁴ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 17 August 2010.

The following section explores these different questions by looking at three levels of belonging – belonging to a place, belonging to a people, and belonging to a polity – and considers the extent to which people are making decisions revolving around these three levels of belonging.

Belonging to a place

Officially, refugees in the settlement state where they are from and are then taken in the appropriate convoy to reception areas where they received transport money to move to their home. And for many, this resonates strongly with the desires of refugees: after years in exile, the strong ties with a specific location were, not surprisingly, strong: “even if I eventually go to a place like Juba, first I will go back to my land to establish myself there then go and find places to do business. Because in my place, I have my people who know me very well so I would not settle with people who do not know me well and I also don’t know them.”⁷⁵ People talked of their return as being not only to Sudan in general, but to a precise part of Sudan – to a specific piece of land or a village. They were now living once more with their relatives and clan members and had re-secured a strong sense of connectedness to the land they were on.

Despite the fact that life is clearly very hard for many of them, the majority of those interviewed around Kajo Keji talked of how they felt a strong bond with where they were now living at a local level. As one young woman who had five children said, “I had the intention of having all my children at school but due to the lack of money they sometimes fall out of school. In the settlement I was being taken care of by the UN and I was with my husband and father. Things were easier. But this is my country and this is where I belong; I have to make ends meet.”⁷⁶ Most importantly they felt they had a legitimacy to be there as a result of the fact that they were Sudanese citizens once more living in Sudan. Thus they were not only connecting to a specific locality, but to a locality which had a strong linkage with their national belonging.

As one woman said, “Here life is better because in the settlements the nationals would look at us as foreigners and would not give us some rights over things like access to water points and one could go looking for odd jobs in the settlement and it ends up with a fight with the nationals.”⁷⁷ Not surprisingly access to land was one of the key issues in this regard: “life here is better because it is my homeland and I can dig freely and harvest food, unlike in Uganda where we were restricted owners of land and didn’t have enough land to cultivate.”⁷⁸; “When we tried to buy land [in Uganda] after some time the sellers would claim ownership again. We were also depending on WFP in the settlement, but here we grow our own food and we don’t wait any longer for food rations.”⁷⁹; “Here I am using land that I have authority over.”⁸⁰; “I own this land. That means I am not a foreigner and I will be buried on this land. My children will

⁷⁵ Interview with Sudanese man, Adjumani, 2 August 2010.

⁷⁶ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 20 August 2010.

⁷⁷ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 15 August 2010.

⁷⁸ Interview with elderly Sudanese woman, 15 August 2010.

⁷⁹ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, Sudan, 15 August 2010.

⁸⁰ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 18 August 2010.

inherit it from me.”⁸¹ “I am a Sudanese and a Kuku. That is what gives me the right to belong here.”⁸²

Thus the desire to re-connect to a place was intimately bound up with recognition of the rights or legitimacy attached to that specific place: throughout the interviews, territory and rights were implicitly, and at times explicitly, linked to the ability for individuals and groups to access their rights.⁸³ Even the process of acquiring rural (as opposed to urban) land was seen to be bound up with being known and recognised within the community.

One woman described the process in her area: “in this village you come through the headman and they will take you to the landlords who are always in the community. If you want to acquire land they sit for a meeting to discuss the person’s background and behaviour in the community before the land is given to him or her. Land in the community is not sold – it is just given for free.” When asked if she thought this process was fair, she replied, “Yes, because it eliminates people with bad backgrounds from the community.”⁸⁴

However, for many people this strong linkage with territory or land was not reflected in where they are currently living. Inevitably, we only spoke with those who have returned to Kajo Keji, not with the many who have “returned” elsewhere. In Juba, for instance, the capital of South Sudan, it is estimated that only 10% of “returnees” were originally from there, giving a small indicator of the strong levels of urbanisation that are taking place at the point of return.⁸⁵ For them, and many others, returning to their original land is not possible, or does not make the best sense.

Thus while some have physically returned to their land, others are living elsewhere – either temporarily or permanently. There are multiple reasons why repatriation does not necessarily involve returning to the same location you fled from – and, at times, for staying in Uganda. Often, this is for practical reasons – within Sudan it might be because of land that has not been cleared of landmines, or because it is too far from trading centres in a context of chronically poor infrastructure, or because they are unable to identify its boundaries: “before people went away they used to stay on their ancestral land, but on coming back people have changed their settlement. People prefer staying near trading centres where they can access services while cultivating their ancestral land.”⁸⁶

For those staying in Uganda, it might be because of business interests, access to schooling or medical facilities. And often this situation was temporary: they might not be living on their land at the moment – or they might have relatives living on it – but the linkage remains strong, as does the hope that they will one day return to it: “In my

⁸¹ Interview with elderly Sudanese woman, 15 August 2010.

⁸² Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 15 August 2010.

⁸³ See, for example, G. Kibreab, “Revisiting the Debate on People, Place, Identity and Displacement,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 1999, 12:4, 385-407.

⁸⁴ Interview with elderly Sudanese woman, 15 August 2010. For more background on land rights in South Sudan, see United States Institute for Peace and Rift Valley Institute, “Local Justice in Southern Sudan”, October 2010.

⁸⁵ ODI, 2008.

⁸⁶ Interview with Sudanese man, Kajo Keji, 17 August 2010.

absence nothing is happening to my land. I have my relatives and for us land is communally used among the Dinka community and is safe.”⁸⁷

Therefore while repatriation, not surprisingly, is strongly linked with land and territory, there was a realisation that, in reality, this notion of “belonging” is a trade-off between the strong desire people have to reconnect with their homeland (in both a general and specific sense) and the realities of a challenging and dynamic geopolitical and economic environment which might force them to live elsewhere.

Belonging to a people

While location was important, however, ideas of belonging were also strongly connected to a people or a community. This strongly relational aspect to belonging was something that had been lacking in exile, and repatriation was seen as an opportunity to restore communities that had been broken. Thus when asked how people understood the concept of home, repeatedly interviewees referred to people and communities. While often strongly linked to rootedness in a specific place, even more important was the linkage with memory, with the past, with culture and a shared history:

“Home is where I was born, where my people are, especially close relatives.”⁸⁸; “Home is a place where people live together with relatives in an extended family and speak one language, enjoy traditional food like dilo [cassava flour bread].”⁸⁹; “I would describe home as a place where I stay with my relatives and there is absence of war and where we belong to the Dinka.”⁹⁰ “Home is where you live in harmony with the people around you and where there is mutual understanding and a state at which there is no violence.”⁹¹; “it is belonging to a family of people. So when I talk of home, I mean the people I belong to.”⁹²; “Home is like a place where a person stays, constructs a house and can settle without interference. Then it also includes a friendly environment, where you can go and collect things like firewood safely and visit neighbours who can help you.”⁹³; “I belong here where I was born, where my umbilical cord is buried.” “Home can be one’s country; it can be where one is born; it is where you have relatives and friends. However, all in all, it is a place where one has land, where one is entitled to do anything without any restrictions. A place where you have rights and freedom to do what you want.”⁹⁴

And the evidence of belonging at a relational level is the creation of a functioning community that acts as a form of protection in a context of incredible hardship. In Sudan, there were numerous stories of people assisting each other, particularly at the point of return, and looking out for each other. “Life here is better because one feels that he or she belongs here and can relate to our neighbours... There is high

⁸⁷ Interview with Sudanese man, Arua, 10 August 2010.

⁸⁸ Interview with elderly woman, Arua, 8 August 2010.

⁸⁹ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 15 August 2010.

⁹⁰ Interview with Sudanese man, Arua, 10 August 2010.

⁹¹ Interview with Sudanese woman, Arua, 10 August 2010.

⁹² Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 17 August 2010.

⁹³ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 15 August 2010.

⁹⁴ Interview with Sudanese man, Kajo Keji, 18 August 2010.

cooperation among the community members here – for instance people come to greet you in the morning and when you lack salt, you can go to a neighbour and get it. When we were in the settlement the people we knew was very few. So it was not easy to relate.”⁹⁵; “I feel that I belong here because I am a son of the soil. We talk with each other and borrow things when we need them.”⁹⁶ Or as an elderly woman who had been living as a self-settled refugee in Uganda said, “life here is much better than in Uganda. Here even one can easily go to the neighbourhood and request for things such as green vegetables and one gets it for free. I will stay here now for the rest of my life.”⁹⁷

Of course exile was not only defined by alienation and exclusion: many refugees achieved a considerable degree of integration at a local level: many have bought land, they own businesses and they have married Ugandans. In particular, those who speak the same language as the Ugandans in their area talked about the extent to which they feel that they belong locally. For instance a widow living in Adjumani who farms a piece of land that her son bought for her through the Ugandan local government system (LC1), talked of how she feels: “I came here for security purposes and I have integrated myself in the community well. If I die I will be buried here. Uganda is like a home for me... I see both Uganda and Sudan as my home and can still be buried here like any Ugandan.”⁹⁸

Yet for most of those interviewed, they talked of the challenges they continue to face as Sudanese people living in Uganda: ultimately, they remain foreign despite operating with *de facto* dual citizenship at a local level for many years. Although many have achieved a considerable degree of integration at a local level there was still a strong yearning to return to Sudan and reconnect.

And, of course, returning to Sudan does not automatically reinstate a feeling of inclusion. For instance a young woman living in Kajo Keji who is not originally from the area and who speaks a different language, Madi, talked of how she is struggling to feel that she belongs. She feels alienated at a local level. “Getting employment in Kajo-Keji, unless you know someone, have relatives, it is very difficult... Maybe it is because of my name – here they only give jobs to their tribe-mates. Unless they see that your name is Kuku, you can’t get a job.”⁹⁹ Later in the interview, however, she talked about the fact that in the village itself, outside of Kajo-Keji, this is feeling of non-acceptance is less of a problem: “even if I am Madi, they know we are all Sudanese. So within this community, there is no problem. Only in Kajo-Keji they discriminate.”¹⁰⁰

Thus belonging to a community is key to people’s ability to cope and survive in an enormously challenging environment. Often it is linked to location – and possibly the ideal is the convergence of the two. Yet at the same time people are realistic: they recognise the enormous divide between ideals and longing, and the reality of the situation they are in. In reality, therefore, home is about multiple forms of belonging;

⁹⁵ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 16 August 2010.

⁹⁶ Interview with Sudanese man, Kajo Keji, 16 August 2010.

⁹⁷ Interview with elderly Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 17 August 2010.

⁹⁸ Interview with Sudanese woman, Adjumani, 2 August 2010.

⁹⁹ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 19 August 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 19 August 2010.

it is about people and places; it is about meeting practical demands and the more abstract notions of belonging that people yearn for. Home is what makes sense geographically, politically, socially, culturally; it is both deeply embedded in history and roots, and yet flexible and dynamic. And it might mean maintaining a home in the settlement at the same time as tentatively building a new house in Kajo-Keji and eyeing up employment opportunities in Juba.

Belonging to a polity

Implicit throughout the process – both the official and unofficial – was recognition of the political content to what is taking place. Indeed, there is growing acknowledgment at a policy level of the need for repatriation to be a political process. Ultimately, successful repatriation needs to be measured by the meaningful restoration (or creation) of the bond of citizenship between a previously exiled refugee and the state to which s/he has returned.

This political component inherent in the process also came through clearly in the interviews, and was seen as a key factor in people's decision-making processes. As explored above, belonging to both a people and a place, despite being expressed often at a local level, is dependent in some way on creating a political link with a state.

Despite the fact that there is a strong notion of overlap in local expressions of belonging in the Uganda/Sudan borderlands, there was also a strong recognition of the fact that people are operating in a context in which human rights are constructed primarily within a national framework – in theory even if not in practice. Implicit throughout these strong localised understandings of belonging, therefore, was the awareness of the need to restore national and political belonging – of the need for *empatriation*.¹⁰¹ In as much as being a refugee represents a rupture of the bond between citizen and state, repatriation needs to represent the restoration of that relationship.

Therefore after decades of political alienation – as represented by the fact that they were not officially allowed to vote in Uganda (although unofficially many were) and of feeling vulnerable with regards to land ownership and land rights – there was recognition of the fact that repatriation offers the opportunity to restore (or create) a political connection with a state. This reconnection, in turn, creates the possibility for accessing their rights as citizens. Not surprisingly, therefore, there was a strongly political narrative underlying the discussion of repatriation.

In this context of return, the process of repatriation is literally triggering the creation of a new state as returnees form a significant – if not vital – constituent within South Sudan. The process of return is inextricably linked to political events, including registering to vote, voting in the recent national elections, and the talk of the forthcoming referendum, all of which are significant and unprecedented political milestones. As one young woman said, “it is important that we vote so we can determine our future.”¹⁰² Another said, “It was my first time to participate in elections

¹⁰¹ Long, 2008, p. 35.

¹⁰² Interview with young Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 18 August 2010.

in my own country. I had always seen it here in Uganda but we had not participated.”¹⁰³ However imperfect and uncertain the process might be, people are still returning and participating in considerable numbers.

In particular, the referendum, which most of those interviewed expected to come out in favour of separation, was seen as a huge opportunity for the fairer distribution of and access to resources. Such massive political change was seen to present an opportunity for creating a new political dispensation that would address the chronic injustices seen to lie at the root of the conflict:

This determination to be part of political change was also reflected in the way in which those who have returned to Sudan talked about those who are still in Uganda: “I think they need to come back and we build our country together so that they are not discriminated against at a later stage.”¹⁰⁴ Return is seen as a political act, despite its vulnerability: “We believed it was important to return so we can vote. But we also consider we might have to go back [to the settlements] because the referendum is coming and anything can happen.”¹⁰⁵

Repatriation, therefore, was seen to genuinely offer the opportunity for the creation of a new form of citizenship. And there was a strong recognition of the fact that citizenship, as it *should* function, is a strongly political idea. When asked what rights citizenship should give her, an elderly woman living in Uganda replied: “it first and foremost gives me a right to elect the leadership of Sudan and then a right to stay in Sudan and also get documents to travel to other countries. Above all it gives me the right to be protected by the government of Sudan.”¹⁰⁶

As someone else said, “Sudanese citizenship gives me the right to speak freely, the right to vote and the right to move.”¹⁰⁷ Political rights, in turn, were seen as the key to accessing resources and other economic rights. Both the causes of war and the experience of exile have represented alienation from political processes and, in turn, exclusion from access to some resources. Repatriation offers the potential to finally become (re)connected. As a result, many have returned to Sudan despite the considerable uncertainty that lies ahead in order to help rebuild their country.

Likewise for those who are living in Uganda, there was a sense that they had repatriated in as much as their political bond with Sudan had been restored through, for instance, the process of voting and the *possibility* of physical return. Having lacked legitimacy at a national level within Uganda they were now able to “belong” to Sudan while remaining in Uganda. In the mean time they are able to live, work, go to school and access healthcare in Uganda – but now, significantly, with a feeling that they are no longer living as refugees “but we are here now like any other person”. Now they see themselves as economic migrants with choices – albeit constrained by circumstances – with the freedom to opt to live in Uganda, rather than as refugees who are unable to return to their homeland.

¹⁰³ Interview with Sudanese man, Adjumani, 2 August 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Assistant Secretary of SSRRC, Kajo Keji, Sudan, 23 August 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Sudanese woman, Kajo Keji, 17 August 2010.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with elderly woman, Arua, 8 August 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Sudanese man, Arua, 9 August 2010.

Yet there was also strong recognition that not only are citizenship rights not being delivered upon fully in Sudan – certainly in the past and questionably in the present – but that the durability of citizenship is under threat. The referendum, which offers so much promise, is also a looming threat. The vast majority of interviewees expressed deep misgivings about the forthcoming referendum, and there was a strong sense of foreboding that the country will once again return to civil war: “The referendum will not change the situation in Sudan at all because the Arabs are not ready for change. I’m expecting separation as the outcome, but this will not go down well with the Arabs ... because of the existence of oil in Abeitu which was invaded and captured by the northerners. The southern government will have to reclaim its territories back which are rich in minerals... We are expecting another war in Sudan...”¹⁰⁸

And even if war does not break out, many predict that the Southern government will be strongly partisan and that many will continue to feel excluded. As a man living in Kajo Keji said, “The referendum won’t change anything. People still have a lot of doubts in the candidates voted for. For example, they are already fighting within the SPLM party and the Dinka will dominate over other tribes. People are now living in fear. Others are saying, it’s better to go back to Uganda.”¹⁰⁹

Therefore there was huge uncertainty about the future, with many fearing war regardless of the outcome. As a result, repatriation is revolving around two competing ideas: the *possibility* of a new Sudanese nationality on the one hand, and the tangible fear that the country is about to unravel once more into civil war on the other. Therefore the restoration of Sudanese nationality, which lies at the heart of the process, represents two opposing possibilities: either the re-securing of citizenship as the path to rights; or the path to renewed conflict and renewed displacement. And people are trying to somehow make sense of this reality. They are hoping for peace, but they are planning for war.

This fundamental uncertainty that is built into the entire repatriation process, therefore, lies at the root of people’s decision-making processes. It is what makes sense of partial and gradual repatriation; of maintaining linkages and resources built up in Uganda over decades, while at the same time planting new roots in Sudan; and of living with *de facto* dual citizenship. For sure, the official process recognises the vulnerability in the process, yet in practice, it is still moving ahead on the premise that people are returning to Sudan and will not come back. Of course, the official repatriation process is not preventing people from seeking alternatives – in fact, it is encouraging that to happen – yet the “do no harm” argument seems somewhat lacking in a context in which huge resources are being used to repatriate refugees in a way that, to many, does not make the best sense.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with young Sudanese man, Arua, 10 August 2010.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Sudanese man, Kajo-Keji, 17 August 2010.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on the border region between northwest Uganda and southern Sudan at a moment of significant change in Sudan's political landscape. It tells the stories of how people are seeking out their own protection as they move from refugee status to re-asserting citizenship in multiple ways, multiple locations and over an extended period of time. It is a complex process of re-negotiation through a tough transition that holds both promise and threats.

Listening to the stories of refugees who are navigating their way through this process therefore allows us to broaden the scope and idea of repatriation in order to ensure that its durability becomes much more possible, not least by reclaiming the political and economic content that lies at the root of the process. For instance it points to an approach that allows people to maintain their assets and networks in Uganda while slowly beginning to reconstruct their lives in Sudan; and it allows for the possibility that you can be a voting Sudanese citizen living in Uganda and be just as repatriated as the person who has re-located to South Sudan.

It is about the ability to plan and to ensure that there is always a contingency at a time when Sudan is quite possibly on the brink of another disaster. It is an approach that allows for people to be a semi-refugee, a semi-migrant, or a person who continues to live in both Sudan and Uganda and take part in the economic and political life of both countries. It allows for people to "go home" but stay in Uganda.

Yet if such complexities are reduced to a one-way ticket home, coping mechanisms are undermined and the durability of return is called into question: while a refugee family travelling on a truck over the border back to their homeland might *look* like repatriation, this paper argues that, in reality, repatriation is about far more than that. It therefore needs to be delinked from physical return, and certainly from physical return as a one-off event.

Of course, to the person confronted with the challenges of trying to implement repatriation programmes this all sounds a little unrealistic. And, as stated above, there is considerable recognition on the ground of the need for flexibility in this instance. But while this paper does not suggest that refugee protection needs to head off into some legal twilight zone where structures become so ambiguous as to be meaningless, what it does propose is that the various programmes and activities carried out under the rubric of protection need to make sure they do not inadvertently undermine or limit safety strategies.

The findings, therefore, point to a number of underlying factors that are likely to make for an effective repatriation process – some of which are reflected in the official process to a greater or lesser extent, and others that are not.

First, the findings have shown that refugees show incredible resourcefulness and creativity regardless of circumstances, and are best placed to make decisions about their own safety. However, acting on these decisions is dependent on being able to move freely within and between states, and to capitalise on networks and assets built up outside of the camps. Therefore repatriation needs to be a process that is refugee-driven rather than one that is essentially driven by the imperatives of humanitarian

programming. In practice what this means is promoting the two interlinked ideas of freedom of movement and freedom of choice whereby refugees are consulted regarding a) *if* they feel that it is timely to return and b) *how* they think that the process should take place.

Second, the findings have shown that, in reality, refugees and returnees are best able to protect their family's safety and ensure ongoing access to livelihoods through gradual return. Therefore repatriation needs to be seen not as a one-off event, but as a staggered process that takes place over a considerable period of time and that might incorporate multiple locations. Refugee families should be given the option to repatriate in stages, and should be encouraged to spread their assets in such a way as to best protect their interests. Although this might seem counter-intuitive for humanitarian programming, it is likely to ensure that limited resources are used more strategically and efficiently.

Third, multiple levels of belonging need to be accommodated throughout the process of repatriation, and recognition needs to be made of the considerable overlap between forced displacement and the multiple categories of migration. Specifically, alternatives to returning physically to Sudan need to be considered – both in the short-term and the long-term. Therefore UNHCR should encourage the government of Uganda to consider offering the possibility of dual nationality or special status of some sort, not least in light of the fact that South Sudan, if it should become an autonomous state, has indicated an interest in becoming part of the East African Community, to those who want to remain in Uganda. This would benefit not only those who are uncertain about their future in Sudan, but would benefit the Ugandan economy as it would increase trade and flexibility between the two countries.

Fourth, the creativity that is evident throughout these interviews points to a far more efficient and dignified approach to refugee management whereby refugees themselves are supported in making wise choices over where they live and how they gain access to livelihoods, education, community and other factors. Should the worst happen and a new wave of displacement take place, refugees would better be hosted in such a way as to build on resources and networks that they have built up over decades, rather than work against them. In the long term, therefore, serious consideration needs to be given to dismantling the settlement structure as the default position for hosting refugees with assistance targeted to the population – both refugee and host – in general.

Fifth, it is clear that life for many returnees is a huge struggle: despite their incredible resourcefulness the situation remains highly precarious. Furthermore, as this paper argues, genuine repatriation is a fragile process that takes place over a considerable length of time. Therefore it is critical that UNHCR ensures an ongoing presence at return sites in South Sudan for an adequate period of time in order to properly monitor the reintegration process and ensure genuine protection for this group of former refugees. At the same time, it is important that adequate resources be available in both Uganda and Sudan should there be renewed displacement post-referendum.

Finally, the political nature of repatriation is crucial to the durability and sustainability of return. Rejected from Sudan and living in exile within Uganda, Sudanese refugees have had little if any ability to influence political processes in their country, and this political exclusion lies at the heart of the conflict that caused them to flee. For those

who are considering, or who are in the process of, repatriating, this history of marginalisation from the centre of power is a key factor in understanding the significance of the process they are undertaking. At the very least, it is a context in which the idea of *repatriation* has to be fundamentally challenged – as well as the way in which protracted refugee situations themselves are handled. All efforts need to be made, therefore, to support the reconstruction of South Sudan and to ensure that repatriation is not only durable but meaningful at an individual and family level and ultimately contributes to development and security.

In sum, therefore, more needs to be done in order for repatriation to be re-configured into something broader and altogether more flexible to ensure that the means of protection guarantees the goal of protection – namely the creation of safety as evidenced by freedom from fear and freedom from want.¹¹⁰ Repatriation needs to create the conditions in which those who have been in exile can genuinely reconnect with the state; and at the same time it needs to enhance local forms of belonging that allow for day-to-day access to livelihoods, and which increase coping mechanisms through creating and sustaining community dynamics and by allowing people to capitalise on economic networks within and across borders.

Ultimately, it needs to promote a clear sense of the political restoration that can help create a foundation for the fragile nation-building exercise that is implicitly and explicitly underway in Southern Sudan. This new understanding of repatriation ensures that protection is genuinely driven by the refugee experience, and offers the best chance of repatriation becoming a *durable* solution.

¹¹⁰ Lomo, 2009.

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