

TRIPLE JEOPARDY: Protecting At-Risk Refugee Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1 - Bol

Bol is 40-year-old South Sudanese refugee living in Northern Uganda. He is married and has five children, all living in a settlement camp. **Bol lost his arm when he was caught in crossfire while fleeing South Sudan.**

After the first year in the settlement camp, Bol feels that his family situation is deteriorating. **He has been unable to get work and earn an income for his family.** Every time he **applies for a job in the settlement, the NGO staff say that he can't do the job because of his arm.**

His wife is now working as a community outreach worker, which is helping the family financially. When his wife first started working, **Bol would try to do household chores, but he stopped because his friends would make fun of him for doing women's work.** Now he spends his day sitting and talking with the other men who also don't have jobs. Some of the other men have started looking for husbands for their young daughters, as they think this will reduce the burden on the family. Bol has started talking to his wife about this option for his eldest daughter, now 14 years old.

Bol and his wife are arguing more and more often about whether their daughters should get married and about money. **Bol wants to have all the money his wife earns and thinks that managing the money should be his job in the household.** His wife's mother is also causing problems – **she keeps saying that Bol is a "half man" who can't look after his family anymore.** Bol feels angry, frustrated and ashamed because he can't support his family like other men. The stress is also affecting the children – Bol was so angry the other day that he hit one of the youngest children for not helping around the house.

Bol says, **"I wish I could return to South Sudan, return to my land, my power, my duty.** I am a prisoner in my own family!"

Case Study 2 – Joseph and his mother Angelique

Angelique is a 39-year-old woman from Burundi. She had three children, but is not sure where her oldest son is since he was kidnapped years ago and forced to join the army. One night, six years ago, soldiers took her husband, beating him badly and killing him. Angelique decided to flee to South Africa with her other two children.

Angelique and her children stay in a church in Durban, sharing a large hall with other refugees because she does not have enough money to rent her own room.

Two years ago, when her youngest son Joseph was 10 years old, he was raped by a 16-year-old boy. The abuser told her son that he would kill Joseph if he said anything to anyone, so Joseph kept quiet. When neighborhood children began discussing the attack, Angelique overheard them and confronted the abuser's brother. The brother asked the abuser if the story were true and the boy said yes, but the abuser remained silent when his brother asked why he did it.

The priest brought Angelique and Joseph to the police where the case was reported. They were sent to a **crisis center.** The crisis center referred Joseph to a **hospital,** where medical service

providers examined him, but they did not give Angelique the results. **The police said they cannot arrest the boy accused of abuse because he is underage.**

The suspected perpetrator and his family were told to leave the church by the priest, but Angelique was not happy with how the case of her son was handled by the police and medical service providers. **She believes the problem is that she is a foreigner**, and that if she were South African, they would have done something more.

A year after the rape, Angelique started to realize that her son had become **absent-minded and was performing poorly at school**. At first, she thought it was normal for children to play and not to pay attention, but then his teachers called and told her that something seemed wrong. She went to the social worker, who suggested that they bring a therapist to the school. The therapist started helping him, but Joseph would lock himself in his room and not want to talk to anyone. One day, he cut his hand with a razor blade five times.

Since her son was raped, **Angelique has not been feeling well**. She explained, “I am a mother. I just know how to laugh with children and to love them. I may not know how to explain to them these tough realities. I am afraid for my son’s future.”

Case Study 3 – Desire

Desire is a **34-year-old Congolese refugee** who has lived in a suburb of Kampala for three years. In the DRC, Desire was a farmer living in a small village in North Kivu.

One day, a group of 17 men dressed in military attire stormed his village. They entered Desire’s house and forced everybody out. They **gang raped Desire’s wife**, together with 10 other women at the village square. Desire pushed and shoved as he tried to save her. **He was beaten by the armed men and was forced publicly to have sex with his older daughter**. They then beat him and other men on their genitals and Desire fainted, waking up in the hospital a day later.

Like many other villagers, Desire and the family **fled and crossed the border into Uganda**, where they were welcomed into a refugee camp. Desire never spoke of what had happened and neither did his wife, daughter or other villagers who stayed in the camp. Nevertheless, he felt everyone was looking at him, saying: “This is wrong, Desire is no longer a man -- he is a woman. Two women cannot live together; it is wrong!”

After a month, Desire left his family. He was so **ashamed**. He was haunted by bad dreams and repeated visions of what had happened. He felt he was no longer a man and decided to save the honor of his family by **banishing himself**. He hitchhiked to Kampala where he is living by himself, making ends meet by picking up bottles and cans off the street.

He is not in contact with his family. His health has deteriorated and he has **suicidal thoughts**. “There is nothing for me anymore.”

One day he met Henry, who works as a pastor in a Kampala church that Congolese refugees frequent. Henry invited Desire to stay for a meeting with other refugee men after prayer. It was a **self-support group** where Congolese survivors met and spoke about their challenges. Desire was shocked at first and did not say a word, but he arrived for the meeting the week after.

He now has a few friends and is considering of travelling with Henry to the refugee camp near the border and perhaps meeting his wife if he can find the courage to do so.

Case 4 – Safari

Safari is a **41-year-old male refugee from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**. Safari worked for the DRC government in the Ministry of Roads and Public Works. He was also a leader of the workers’

union, which defended the rights of the workers at the ministry. In April 2013, Safari was **abducted by unknown people** on his way home from work. The men **blindfolded him, forced him to swallow some pills and injected him with unknown drugs**. He became unconscious and could not remember what transpired after that. The abductors then called his wife and demanded money as **ransom** in order to release him. They threatened her and said that she must send them the money or they would kill her husband. His wife reported the matter to the police officers, who carried out a search and opened an investigation into the incident. The police found Safari, naked and tied with ropes, on the roadside.

The police later took Safari to the hospital for treatment. Due to **inadequate facilities** to deal with his condition, the doctors sent him to Nairobi, Kenya, for specialized treatment. The doctor's report indicated that **Safari had been raped and injected with unknown drugs**. Safari also presented with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (**PTSD**) and acute depression. After staying in Nairobi for 10 days, Safari was discharged after improvement and went back to Congo. His wife reported that after his return, he was not behaving normally; he would leave the house without telling anyone where he was going and would often be gone for several days. After returning, he became isolated and would not talk much. He developed stool incontinence and was brought back to Nairobi for a medical review.

Two months later, his condition worsened and he developed incontinence again and he was rushed to Nairobi for treatment. While he was in Nairobi, his house in the DRC was attacked by unknown people who **threatened to kill his wife** if she didn't disclose Safari's whereabouts. The men then gang raped her. After that attack, Safari's wife decided to flee with her children and joined her husband in Nairobi.

Safari and his family received refugee status in Kenya. He has been diagnosed with severe post-traumatic stress disorder and is taking medication. He experiences severe headaches. He has stool incontinence and must use adult diapers. He experiences back pain and lower abdominal pains. He is forgetful, sometimes he experiences **sleep deprivation** and he reported feeling fearful as a result of what he went through. He is also facing **adjustment challenges** as he compares his life in DRC to that in his country of asylum. He is extremely anxious because he cannot provide for his family. He feels weak and that he is "**not a man**," both for having been violated and for allowing his wife to be violated as well.

In recent months, Safari's family has been receiving financial assistance provided by an international NGO. He is isolated. Because of his incontinence, he is self-conscious and afraid to be identified as a survivor of rape.