

## I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

### TESTIMONY BY A FORMER CHILD SOLDIER, GULU, NORTHERN UGANDA

**“I was going to school in the morning. The night before I’d heard gunshots but I didn’t know that it was rebels.** So in the morning I just washed my feet and started walking to school. The road I took is where I met them.

They asked me if there were soldiers around. I told them that I didn’t know. They told me to take them to the barracks and show them where the soldiers were hiding. They told me to lead and I was leading them. When we reached the barracks there were no soldiers there. So they told me to start burning the soldiers’ huts. It was during the day. People were already moving on the road.

Then we heard the bombing. They said that they were going to kill me because the soldiers were bombing them and I had not told them where the soldiers were. Then they changed their minds and told me to run. We ran for a long time, until we came to a place where there were others. They had taken others, but they were only boys. I was the only girl. I had to cook because they were hungry.

They picked this one boy who was from the same village as me. They had found him with a gumboot so they said he was a soldier. But he wasn’t – he was a student in the same school as my brother. They picked two captives to kill that boy. They killed him near where I was.

Then they started asking me again, didn’t I know where the soldiers were. I told them I didn’t know anything. This man, a commander, said he had abducted me to be his wife. But another commander said no, that I was still young and could not become his wife.

We began moving to Sudan. I suffered so much because my feet were swollen. One time they left me behind to be killed. But one of the commanders found me and told the boys to carry me. There was no food and we were so hungry. Sometimes we would eat leaves. They had no taste.



When we arrived in Sudan I couldn’t move for one month because my feet were painful so much. After my feet healed, they gave me a gun. We all had guns. They said that every one of us had to have a gun, even if they hadn’t done the training.

I was given to a commander. He refused to let me to go back to Uganda because he said I would escape. Other girls were picked to go fighting in Uganda but I remained behind. And I would cry because I feared to sleep with men.

Finally after being there in Sudan for four years, they let me go to Uganda. The man I was given to, he was shot dead by the Ugandan soldiers. I escaped when the plane was bombing the rebels and there was so much shooting.

In the bush the rebels always tell us that the Ugandan soldiers will rape us or kill us. So everyone is scared of them. So I hid from the soldiers because I knew that they might kill me or rape me. But when they caught me they didn’t do it, they didn’t do anything to me. Instead, they took me from one barracks to another and then finally they brought me to Gulu.

I didn’t know that I was pregnant. When I came they took me to the hospital and discovered that I was pregnant. I’m always worried.”



*“This is me. This is when we escaped from Sudan. One is looking back, the other forward. We escaped at night. No one saw us. We went very slowly. At first we didn’t know which way to go. Then we said, “Look, there is the moon.” So we knew which way to go.”*



*“This is when we reached the border. We held up olive leaves to show we were in peace and they called over to us. In the back you see when we were taken by the Ugandan soldiers.”*