

After Rape

Violence, Justice, and Social Harmony in Uganda

Following the International Criminal Court (ICC) intervention in 2005, northern Uganda has been at the heart of international justice debates. The emergent controversy, however, missed crucial aspects of Acholi realities: that the primary moral imperative in the wake of wrongdoing was not punishment but, instead, the restoration of social harmony. Drawing upon abundant fieldwork and in-depth interviews with almost 200 women, Holly Porter examines issues surrounding wrongdoing and justice, sexual violence and rape, among the Acholi people in northern Uganda.

This intricate exploration offers evidence of a more complicated and nuanced explanation of rape and its aftermath, suggesting a re-imagining of the meanings of post-atrocity justice, whilst acknowledging the role of sex, power, and politics in all sexual experiences between coercion and consent. With its wide investigation of social life in northern Uganda, this provocative study offers vital analysis for those interested in sexual and gender violence, post-conflict reconstruction, and human rights.

Holly Porter is a research fellow at the Department of International Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and lead researcher for the Justice and Security Research Programme in northern Uganda, where she has lived and researched for more than ten years. Dr Porter's research has focussed on gender, sexualities and sexual violence, war and violence, and local notions of healing and justice. Her work has been published in journals including: *Africa*, *Women's Studies International Forum*, and the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*.

THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN LIBRARY

General Editors

LESLIE BANK, *Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), South Africa*

HARRI ENGLUND, *University of Cambridge*

ADELINE MASQUELIER, *Tulane University, Louisiana*

BENJAMIN SOARES, *African Studies Centre, Leiden*

The International African Library (IAL) is a major monograph series from the International African Institute. Theoretically informed ethnographies, and studies of social relations ‘on the ground’ that are sensitive to local cultural forms, have long been central to the Institute’s publications programme. The IAL maintains this strength and extends it into new areas of contemporary concern, both practical and intellectual. It includes works focussed on the linkages between local, national, and global levels of society; writings on political economy and power; studies at the interface of the sociocultural and the environmental; analyses of the roles of religion, cosmology, and ritual in social organisation; and historical studies, especially those of a social, cultural, or interdisciplinary character.

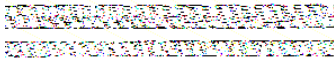
For a list of titles published in the series, please see the end of the book.

After Rape

*Violence, Justice, and Social Harmony
in Uganda*

Holly Porter

International African Institute, London
and



Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-18004-8 — After Rape
Holly Porter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi - 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107180048

© Holly Porter 2017

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licencing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication data

Names: Porter, Holly, 1980– author.

Title: After rape : violence, justice, and social harmony in Uganda / Holly Porter.

Other titles: International African library.

Description: New York City : Cambridge University Press, 2016. |

Series: The international African library | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016032814 | ISBN 9781107180048

Subjects: LCSH: Rape – Social aspects – Uganda. | Rape as a weapon of war – Uganda. | Conflict management – Uganda. | Justice, Administration of – Uganda. | Acholi (African people) – Uganda – Social conditions – 20th century. | Acholi (African people) – Uganda – Social conditions – 21st century.

Classification: LCC HV6569.U33 P67 2016 | DDC 364.1532096761 – dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016032814>

ISBN 978-1-107-18004-8 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-18004-8 — After Rape
Holly Porter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To my daughters

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-18004-8 — After Rape
Holly Porter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>List of abbreviations and acronyms</i>	xii
1 Introduction	1
The story of two rapes	1
Social harmony	2
Rape, wrongdoing, and justice	6
The northern Uganda war and Acholi realities	8
Brief chapter overview	13
Concluding reflections: on writing about rape	15
2 Life and participant reflection in northern Uganda	20
The research project	26
Inhabiting patriarchal dimensions of social harmony	30
3 Rape, wrongdoing, and justice	44
Legal definitions and social understandings of rape	45
Counting rape in Acholi	48
Rape within the logic of violence in war	52
Accounting for rape	55
Wrongdoing	64
Justice	65
4 Acholi love: sex and social belonging	75
Sex and meaning	79
‘Meeting’ to marriage	93
Sexual education	101
Conclusion	104
5 Consent and rape: when does ‘no’ mean no?	106
Distinguishing sexual transgression from acceptable sex	108
Notions of consent	109
Notions of rape	119
Conclusion	128
6 Social harmony and the space between local solutions and judicial systems	130
The meaning of justice	134
	vii

viii	Contents	
	‘Embedded’ and ‘distanced’ response to crime	140
	Institutional trust and boundaries of moral jurisdiction	144
	Revenge and forgiveness	149
	Moral community and perceptions of punishment	152
	Conclusion	155
7	Mango trees, offices, and altars: the role of relatives, NGOs, and churches	157
	Relatives	160
	NGOs	169
	Churches	176
	Conclusion	183
8	Comparing the aftermath of civilian and combatant rape	185
	Abduction and rape with intent to marry	188
	Rape by strangers	204
	Conclusion: reflections on implications for transitional justice	210
9	Conclusion: medicine and lightning	213
	Theoretical reflections	214
	The story of the Ogre and the mother of Ayaa	217
	Meaning in context	220
	Final thoughts	226
	<i>References</i>	229
	<i>Index</i>	248

Figures

3.1	Prevalence of rape among women in the rural village	<i>page</i> 50
3.2	Prevalence of rape among women in the Gulu suburban village	50
6.1	Justice outcomes in response to rape	142
7.1	Actors women said they would involve after rape	159
7.2	Actors actually involved after rape	159
8.1	Perpetrators of rapes by category	187

Acknowledgements

It has taken two villages, plus many other people flung across the globe, to bring this book into being. My gratitude is due to them all, but here I single out a few for special thanks.

This book in its more raw form was the result of doctoral research supervised by two people to whom my appreciation would be difficult to overstate: Tim Allen, without whom the following pages – if there was a book at all – would be very different and much the poorer. I have learned a great deal from him over the past years. His constant confidence in me, great knowledge of this region and literature, and gusto for provocative conversations have fuelled my evolving ideas and writing, as well as leading me in the direction of anthropology; for all of this and more, I am very grateful. Ron Atkinson's thoughtful engagement with the substance of my work has helped me bring greater clarity and cohesion to it and to my thinking. We share a concern for presenting an accurate and sympathetic representation of our Acholi hosts, and so it was a great gift that he was my neighbour on the outskirts of Gulu town while I finished the thesis, and again as this book took shape.

Through the editorial process with IAI and Cambridge University Press this book has benefited greatly from the careful readings and insightful suggestions of Harri Englund, Adam Branch, Sandrine Perrot, Ron Atkinson, and Stephanie Kitchen. The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) generously provided funding for my initial doctoral work, and support through the Justice and Security Research Programme at the LSE saw the project through to this point. And a big thanks to Quinn and Anne for their beautiful and arresting photography of Acholi, and allowing me to use it here.

Many ideas have been inspired and evolved in conversation with brilliant scholars and friends. Particularly I am indebted to those who read and engaged with works-in-progress (in my mind and on paper) at various stages over the past years: Julian Hopwood, Anna Macdonald, Ryan O'Byrne, Phil Clark, Alex de Waal, Christopher Clapham, Ray Abrahams, Peter Marsden, Father Joe Okumu, Dean Peachey, Wade Snowdon, Alyson Smith, Sylvia Opinia, Immaculate Akongo, Niels Harbitz, Evelyn Akello, Karl Muth, Henni Alava, Anouk Rigterink, Hakan

Acknowledgements

xi

Sekinelgin, Henry Kilama Komakech, Rebecca Tapscott, Deval Desai, Martha Lagace, Nancy Rydberg, Ben Mergelsberg, Dorothy Atim, and Jackline Atingo.

An earlier version of some sections of Chapter 6 was published in the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*; see Porter (2012).

An adapted article version of Chapter 7 was supported by the International Law and Policy Initiative as part of a project on preventing sexual and gender-based violence in the Great Lakes region, funded by Norad, and published in *Journal for Group and Minority Rights*; see Porter (2015c).

On a more personal note, I am thankful to Ben, my partner in life, love, and everything that matters, who has unswervingly supported my aspirations and lightened my load when it was too heavy. When one spends as much time thinking about sexual violence as I do, it is a blessing indeed to have such a good man hold my hand and often our children along the way. My daughters, Elliyah Joi Akidi and Saffran Hope Agenorwot, who were always beautiful distractions from writing and reminders of things more important. My parents, brother, sister, and their incredible partners, all of whom have encouraged me emotionally and intellectually.

Most importantly, I am grateful to the women and their families whose experiences are the living and breathing heart of this work. My thanks to them for opening their lives to this probing outsider. May their daughters and granddaughters live free of the fear of what they survived in the throes of war and within their homes.

Lastly, to Beatrice Lajara, and the rest of the family who have welcomed me and mine as kin. The friendship and insight shared with me over the years have given shape to this work and courage to me. It is from your, now I say 'our', home that I have found a reference point. My perspective and entry into life in Acholi began in your exceedingly enjoyable company. Thank you.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICD	International Crimes Division
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
JLOS	Justice Law and Order Sector
LC	Local Council/Councilor
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Nongovernmental Organisation
NRA	National Resistance Army
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan
RC	Resistance Council
SWAY	Survey of War Affected Youth
TFV	Trust Fund for Victims
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UPDA	Uganda People's Defence Army, called <i>civil</i> , go and tell, by most Acholi
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces