



**Vincent Lyn's report from recent field trip to Uganda and South Sudan has been chosen as the top inspirational story for this annual report. The story is fresh in all our minds and serves as a vivid reminder of why we serve selflessly.**

## Inspirational Stories

On July 27, 2016, the Associated Press had reported that numerous witnesses stated a mass rape against women and that UN Peace Keepers just looked on doing nothing to stop it. And on December 19, 2016 the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon warned that South Sudan would be heading toward Genocide. "If we fail to act, South Sudan will be on a trajectory towards mass atrocities". He said.

Knowing full well that the situation, I left Kampala with Samuel (my driver) in a rented car and drove 5 hours north into Northern Uganda where Joseph Kony (Leader of the LRA Lord's Resistance Army) territory had massacred many hundreds of children. We crossed the border at Nimule and continued our journey on the Nimule-Juba highway. I had been following daily reports on the ongoing changes in the sporadic ethnic cleansing throughout the country and mass killings, burning of busses and random attacks along the highway. Kidnappings, raping of women and young girls had now become common place. The attack on July 11, 2016 on the Terrain Hotel compound in Juba signaled one of the worst attacks on foreigners in the new country's history. Between 80 and 100 South Sudanese soldiers attacked the compound that mostly housed foreign staff and carried out repeated rapes, mock executions, looting, and killings and forced to watch a local journalist be shot dead. The announcement came a day after the United Nations made public its own investigation that found U.N. peacekeepers nearby did not respond to calls for help during the attack. Clashes had begun days earlier when fighting resumed between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir, and those loyal to rebel leader his former Vice President Reik Machar.

On Dec 25th, Christmas Day, the temperature reached 100F by 10am and 106F by 1pm. The vehicle had no air-conditioning system, there was just dust and hot scorching wind blowing everywhere. I had to take off my Vest and Helmet as it was just too hot to keep them on. I could hear sporadic gunfire the very specific sound of the AK47 and see in the distance smoke rising from the burning of villages.

A passing car signaled to us pointing to the rear of the car, so we stopped. While Samuel checked the car, I decided to quickly take some pictures. Behind me what appeared to be a headless body lying face down in the dirt road. It had been there a while as the blood was dried and the body now starting to decay. It was the first of many dead I would witness. One could see a car maybe every 10-15 minutes and wave occasionally but no one stopping for anything. At some point, we drove for nearly 2 hours and hadn't seen a car following us, except cars going in the opposite direction. We had made a few wrong turns and headed in the wrong direction deeper in the conflict zones but thank goodness Samuel spoke many local dialects and though his Arabic was basic he could understand a lot. We stopped to ask passing locals who were on motor scooters. Always saying "Hi Boss" as the initial greeting. They were all very helpful in pointing us in the proper direction.

My intuition had told me to put the Vest and Helmet back on. I was sweating profusely but we had lots of water and food but I started getting a little nervous and scared. As we drove more and more bodies of men, women and children lay dead on the roadside. I knew that the rebels were indiscriminately setting fire to busses on the main highway. Dragging women and young girls off the busses and out of cars and raping and killing them. The U.N. had recently reported that the Sudanese Government had given permission to the Army and condoned the raping of women and young girls in civil war. I know throughout all wars rape has been a means to provoke fear in the enemy. Rape was committed by US marines in Vietnam. It was not the brightest hour for the US military. For a government to announced it condones rape, that is sheer madness!

We passed many military checkpoints along the way and always asking them how the situation was ahead of us. They all said it's not bad, people are traveling to and from but to take extreme care and do not stop for anyone. Of course, as is the norm there's always bribery involved either with food and water but mostly they want money. Samuel did not want to continue and I don't blame him. He's a very nice young 30-year-old with a wife and child who had recently contracted malaria so he needed the money desperately for his child's medications. The \$600 we had negotiated on is an enormous amount of money in Uganda approximately 2 million Ugandan Shillings. More money than the average person would make in 6 months and this was just 3-4 days' maximum. I had met Samuel 6 weeks earlier when I was in Uganda for the first time, now back here way sooner than I expected we had now become friends. Our 1,000-mile journey traversing east to west and north to south was surely enough time to talk about our lives and we shared many wonderful and heartwarming conversations.

Samuel and I arranged that I would continue and meet back up at the Zawadi Hotel in the Adjumani District back on the Ugandan side of the border. Adjumani is the location of the many refugee settlement camps that is home to nearly one million Sudanese who have fled persecution in the past 10 years since the main camp was first erected. There have been many more camps erected in the district as the flow of displaced people has overwhelmed the UNHCR. Now with the recent escalation of violence some 3,000 people are crossing the border every day. When I returned, I told him we would both visit the main camp Pagirinya - Adjumani Refugee Settlement. And after that make our way back to Uganda back to safety and finally Kampala the capital city of Uganda.

But I was far from out of the woods. What was about to happen would change my life forever.....

I grabbed my backpack and Samuel drove back and eventually across the Nimule border to safety. As I looked back and lost sight of him I now was on my own and thought to myself I must raving mad. I didn't even have a gun just a knife and a telescopic baton. A lot of good that's going to do me. I was on foot for a few miles and eventually flagged down a guy and hitched a ride on the back of his motor

scooter. I really had no place in mind just wanted to see as much as I could. His name was Suleiman and he spoke a little broken English. He said "very danger here very danger, Dinka Dinka shooting". I asked him if he could show me and I told him I'm in consultative service with the U.N. showed him the emblem of my cap and ID badge. We agreed on how much he would get paid, and he drove me through villages that had been burned to the ground and bloated bodies lay strewn out everywhere. It was sickening and made me vomit. I have been to many conflict zones around Africa in effort to save at-risk children from child trafficking but never been witness to such atrocities. As we were back on the dirt road following a small mini-bus load of people, a fast-approaching vehicle coming from the opposite direction stopped us all. I'm not even sure why I'm still alive but they started setting fire to the bus and then proceeded to drag the women and young girls off bus. Raped and shot them all in a hail of gunfire. A ricocheting bullet immediately killed my scooter driver and ricocheted off my helmet. The force threw me from the scooter into the dirt face down. I turned over only to see the muzzle of a gun in my face. I was in shock and looked up knowing this is it, I'm going to die in the middle of nowhere and no will ever know about it or find me. Someone then shouted I'm assuming the leader and came over asking for my stuff rummaging through my bag. Of course, money is what he wanted I guess. I gave him everything I had which was about \$600 well nearly everything not the money I had in the bottom of my boot. I showed him my knife which he really liked and the baton which also made him smile when I showed him how they both worked and he took them both. He then tapped me on my shoulder in a strange show of solidarity and said. "You from America, I like America, they give us many weapons. America good. You go. You go back!" And pointed for me to walk back in the direction I came. As I started walking the look on these Dinka rebels some as young as 10 years old maybe even younger. I will never ever forget as long as I live the look in their eyes. If there ever was a child in them it was long gone. They were dead to the world and the world had left any sign of compassion or emotion in them. They were not human anymore.

I started walking along the dirt road and all I could hear screams of the women and girls being raped and eventual gunfire and then silence except for the jeering of the rebels. I walked and wept uncontrollably and the deafening sounds grew fainter until I could hear nothing. The sun was at its highest point and I took off my helmet then noticing where the bullet had ricocheted from it. Before I left, I hadn't planned on bringing one but had purchased one a month earlier as they are made to order. But it would not arrive to me in time before leaving on my trip. I had to order one from a different company. Paraclete a company that had developed a new ground breaking innovation delivering the most advanced tactical body-armor and helmets -- very expensive but obviously, I now know it saved my life.

I walked for many miles so it seemed remembering certain land marks I had passed along the way with Suleiman the guy on the scooter who now lay dead on a forgotten dirt road behind me. I sat

down sometimes and rested in the shade and took a few photos of myself. I still wasn't sure I would make it out of there alive but I wasn't scared anymore. Whatever was going to happen to me was now in God's hands. Eventually I came across another scooter driver and just asked him to get me to the border crossing at Nimule. I gave him \$20 out of my boot and he was elated. I walked across the border and then taking another scooter ride to meet Samuel at the Zawadi Hotel in Adjumani, where he was waiting for me just like he said. I took a shower and amazingly slept but since that night there have been many sleepless nights waking up from nightmares sweating and crying. We ate breakfast and made our way to the Adjumani Settlement Camp and except for one guard at the front entrance. He checked my UN ID and asked "we just want to tour the camp". We drove in and stopped and saw masses of children. I got out and gave bags of candy to the woman in charge and the children many of whom are extremely sick chasing after the woman to get a single candy. This camp is home to some 350,000 people many who have been there for 10 years since it was erected. It is the most awful wretched place I've ever seen in my life. Death is everywhere you look. Samuel stopped the car and said is that a dead woman back there? We backed up and yes it was a dead woman lying in the dirt with a child sitting there next to her. She must've just died as the little boy despondent had no idea his mother was dead. Samuel had never seen anything like it either and this also was his first time seeing the camp.

We spent a few hours at the camp and I took a few videos. But I am not a war correspondent or war photo journalist and for me it's extremely difficult to take photos or videos of peoples unimaginable suffering. Samuel and I were back on the road and in the distance, we saw smoke rising far up and the smell of burning and death in the horizon. I stayed silent and hours past until we had to stop at a gas station and fill up the car. I only remember saying to Samuel that I had not seen one Western person not white, brown, yellow not even one in the nearly thousand miles we'd driven. He agreed he hadn't seen one either.

The drive was much different than the one heading up a few days earlier. As we approached the outskirts of Kampala we saw a car knock a woman and child off a scooter. The woman had to dive off with her child in tow. Thank God, they fell on a grass embankment. We stopped and the woman was screaming at the driver of the car as Samuel shouted at him as well. Luckily no one was hurt and the child was unhurt too. Nothing will happen and everyone will go about their business as usual. T.I.A stands for - This is Africa! He said. Everyone says it all the time. As Samuel arrived at the hotel and dropped me off his last two words were THANK GOD!!!

Two days later I would be invited to meet his Majesty the King - Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II of the Buganda Kingdom at his Palace in Mmengo, Kampala. I'm glad to be alive and I know it will take weeks if not months to process everything that happened to me over there. I only know that for the ones I left behind who were brutally butchered. If nothing is done many more will senselessly die.

Therefore, I will keep speaking about the atrocities and close to death experience at the hands of the Dinka Rebels.

My prayers go out to the people of South Sudan.

Vincent Lyn.

2017.

## **About Vincent Lyn**

Vincent Lyn is the founder of Pro-Force Security Corp which deals with Corporate and high net-personal Security. He is also a Licensed Private Investigator, a Certified Police Instructor and Air Marshall Instructor by the Department of Air Security for the International Confederation of Police & Security Experts. He serves in consultative status with the United Nations ECOSOC with African Views using his skill to support the United States and United Nations' mission on Rescue & Recovery of child slaves and trafficking. He has travelled to 107 countries and his recent experience in South Sudan presented above sums up the overall typical day on the field.

Vincent is product of the prestigious Boston Conservatory of Music, majoring in piano performance and composition Lyn maintained his parallel passion by composing 'Canto-pop' songs for recording artists with PolyGram Records, two of which became top ten hits. As a person of mixed heritage, Half British, half Chinese, a 10th degree Black Sash and scholar of Chinese Medicine and heir of his family's Ling Gar style of Kung-Fu, he has used his predisposed talent to win kickboxing championship as well as gained prestigious acting and roles on the big screen and modeling contract with world-class producers and designers. Vincent joined the executive board of African Views in 2016 and he continues to travel throughout the world giving lectures seminars and concerts in the areas of his expertise and interest. He also writes for various martial art publications. In the fall of 2016, he received an honorary doctoral title from the International College of Asian studies, in Spain.

To learn more about Vincent, go to: <http://www.vincentlyn.com>