ASSESSMENT OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS IN UGANDA; A CASE OF KYANGWALI REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

BY

KASOZI EDRISA

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DECLARATION

I**, Kasozi Edrisa**, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and has not been presented anywhere and is not presented to any other institution for any award.

Signed: _____ Date: 10/10/2025

2024/FEB/MADGS/M235757/WKD/KLA

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation has been done with my supervision and is ready for field approval.

Signed: _____ Date: 10/10/2025

Mr. Ssebunya Robert

Supervisor

DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my beloved family for the love holistic moral, financial and social support throughout my education and life in general and also my siblings for their endless prayers for me.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

US	:	United States
MENA	:	Middle East and North Africa
NGOs	:	Non Governmental Organizations
IDP	:	Internally displaced persons
AMUR	:	Rwandan Muslim Association
OPM	:	Office of the Prime Minister
RLP	:	Refugee Law Project
SPLA	:	Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army
RWC	:	Refugee Welfare Councils
GOU	:	The Government of Uganda
WFP	: `	World Food Programme
GBV	:	Gender-based violence

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Conflict: is defined as a conflict between individuals resulting from different thought process, attitudes, understandings, interests, requirements and even perceptions. A conflict leads to violent arguments, physical abuse, and definitely loss of peace and harmony.

Religion: in this study, we define religion as a collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and worldviews that establish symbols that connect humanity with spirituality and sometimes, to moral values. The word religion is sometimes used interchangeably with faith or belief system.

Conflict Resolution: is an opportunity for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to their differences. Disagreements can be personal, financial, political, or emotional. When disputes arise, negotiation is often the best way to resolve differences.

Islamic religious leadership: Islamic religious leadership refers to the individuals and institutions that hold religious authority within the Islamic faith and guide the spiritual, moral and sometimes socio-political lives of Muslim communities. These leaders interpret Islamic teachings, lead religious rituals, resolve community disputes and offer moral guidance.

Conflict Resolution: It is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating a peaceful ending of conflict through repairing broken relationships so that the conduct of the warring parties has been completely transformed. Conflict resolution in Islam focuses on the principles and values central to peaceful life, such as Justice (Adl), which is perceived as a precondition to peace, the Concepts of Patience (Sabr), Compassion, Mercy,

Refugee A refugee is a person who leaves or is unable to return their country of their nationality as a result of well-founded fear from persecution by their state of origin. Such a person fears persecution for reasons of race, religion, political opinion, and nationality. A person is also considered a refugee if they are forced to leave their country of nationality or origin as a result of events that threaten public order. In such instances, a person need not fear being persecuted.

Refugee settlement: According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee settlement refers to a planned or spontaneous site established to accommodate refugees, typically managed by a host government in collaboration with humanitarian agencies, with the aim of providing temporary residence and essential services until durable solutions are found."

ABSTRACT

The study was about the assessment of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda; A case study of Buyale refugee settlement. The study was guided by the following objectives: To examine the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement, to analyze community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement, to examine the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement. The study adopted a case study design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study used a population of 260 and a sample size of 155, questionnaire and interview guide were the main data collection instruments.

The study field findings revealed that 79(52.6%) of the respondents agreed that the Qur'an provides relevant guidance on resolving disputes peacefully. However, 26(17.3%) were neutral on the statement and 45(30%) were in disagreement. Some community members perceive religious teachings disconnected from the realities of the disputes they encounter like those involving resources, domestic tensions or ethnic divisions. Field findings presented that the majority 109(72.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that the leadership structure among Islamic clerics is clear and well respected in the refugee community. Field findings presented that 92(61.3%) were in agreement that the community believes Islamic leaders keep conflict discussions confidential. However, 18(12%) were not sure and 40(26.7%) of the respondents were in disagreement. Based on the study findings, it is concluded that the community widely recognizes and embraces Islamic values such as peace, reconciliation, forgiveness, patience, and non-violence as guiding principles in managing disputes. These teachings are embedded in the moral and spiritual life of the refugees and are often the first point of reference when conflicts arise.

The study recommended that Islamic Religious Leaders should intensify the teaching of Qur'anic principles on patience, forgiveness and justice through Friday sermons, Qur'an schools and youth forums. These teachings should be linked directly to real-life refugee experiences. The study further recommends that Muslim States and International Islamic Institutions should support theological training and educational materials on conflict resolution for refugee-based religious-leaders.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, justification of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the study

The study was about the assessment of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda; A case study of Kyangwali refugee settlement. The study is important because Leadership based on Islam and principles of justice, consultation and ethics has been regarded more and more as a positive factor that can improve the effectiveness of employees in Muslim countries (Rashid et al., 2023). Islam requires Muslims to assist and protect vulnerable people and offers a number of mechanisms for their care and support. According to Islamic migration law (hijrah), individuals have the right both to seek and to be granted asylum in any Muslim state (Arnaout, 2017). Furthermore, it is the duty of Muslims to accept and protect refugees for as long as they seek protection. In comparison to modern refugee law, hijrah offers a broader definition of a refugee, and gives individuals, rather than states, the right to determine asylum. However, despite its significance in Islam, hijrah is rarely invoked by Muslim states today. The promotion of Islamic teachings on refugees could encourage Muslim states to widen their acceptance and protection of refugees (An-Na'im, A. 2018).

1.1.1 Conceptual perspective

The use of religion in conflict resolution has been a factor that has become prominent in a number of conflicts. Whether religion is the main cause in most of these conflicts has been a

subject that many conflict scholars have debated on (Iqbal, et al, 2020). In most cases, religion has been considered a trigger factor in many of the conflicts throughout the world. Rather than being considered as a main cause, it has been used also as a mobilizing agent in some of the conflicts in Africa. Religion has been used as a means of identity, which is very important to the individual and the society at large (Hashim, 2018). Thus it often happens that a threat to one's religious belief more often than not triggers a violent outburst. Religion has been found to be used both constructively and destructively and as such used as a motivational factor. Due to this, the relationship between religion as a factor or cause of conflict and conflict in itself should be well researched so as to enable a clear understanding of it (Husti, & Mahyarni, 2019).

Islamic religious leadership refers to the spiritual and moral guidance provided by recognized figures within the Muslim community like (Imams, Sheikhs, and Ulamas). These leaders shape values, promote social cohesion and influencing behaviors through religious teachings grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith (El-Ayouty, 2015). In refugee settlement where formal governance systems are overstretched, religious leaders act as informal authorities and community custodians who guide their followers in both spiritual matters and also in social and conflict-related issues (Ahmed, 2016). The credibility and moral authority these leaders command enable them to act as neutral mediators in disputes especially in areas characterized by cultural diversity, resource scarcity and psychological trauma (Mutiso & Wamue-Ngare, 2020).

Rahim (2020) defined conflict as a disagreement that occurs between individuals or within organizations or teams. Trudel and Reio (2021) explained conflict as negative perception of an individual's actions/behavior that causes harm. Conflict is an inevitable, yet integral aspect of human existence (Zakari et al., 2020), especially in inter-dependent tasks. Rahim (2020) opined that conflict occurs due to six causes: (1) in the course of incompatibility with one's beliefs or

interests; (2) incompatibility with personal preferences; (3) in a low supply and high demand situation; (4) when one's behavior is driven by beliefs, values, and skills that are perceived by others to be exclusive; (5) in case of partially exclusive behaviors; and (6) task interdependence. The costs of conflict in organizations are well-documented among researchers. This includes loss of productivity, absenteeism, stress-related leave, mediation, and health care (Nixon et al. 2021). In any given organization, a leader may spend between 13% and 25% of their time resolving and mitigating conflict (Pavlakis et al., 2021).

Conflict resolution refers to the processes, methods, and mechanisms through which disputes are addressed and resolved constructively, restoring harmony within a community. In refugee settlements, conflicts emerge due to ethnic divisions, limited access to resources, trauma-induced aggression, or unclear leadership structures. Effective conflict resolution entails approaches that are participatory, culturally sensitive and inclusive (Pavlakis et al., 2021).

In Islamic tradition, conflict resolution is embedded within the concepts of *Sulh* (amicable settlement), *Hakama* (arbitration), and *Islah* (reconciliation) which emphasize peaceful dialogue, negotiation and the preservation of social harmony (Auda, 2010). The independent variable (Islamic Religious Leadership) is conceptualized as; Islamic doctrines and principles, spiritual guidance, conflict mediation and community mobilization as the key indicators which provide various ways in which Muslim religious leaders influence community behaviour, provide counselling grounded in Islamic teachings and facilitate peaceful coexistence in refugee settlements (Said & Funk, 2002; El-Tom, 2012). The dependent variable (Conflict Resolution) will be measured through; reduced conflict incidents, effective mediation outcomes, social cohesion and the sustainable peace as the dimensions. These indicators provide important

information into the extent to which disputes are addressed, relationships are restored and long-term peace is maintained in communities experiencing tensions (UNHCR, 2021).

1.1.2 Historical perspective

Since the September 11 attacks of 2001 in the United States (US) and the consequential war on terror, religion has been portrayed as a cause or driver of violence, largely because of religious extremism and political Islam (McNamee & Muyangwa, 2021). However, the increasing academic discourse on this theme appears to have not taken cognisant that religion could also be a cause or driver of peace. Therefore, values from religion concerning peace building and peace initiatives especially in Africa could be a practical thrust for academic debate. Regardless of this widespread academic concept about the ambivalence of the sacred (Philpott, 2017), it remains worth investigating the specific religious characteristics that contribute to and influence peace building, Violence and discrimination veiled with religion, as well as injustices, have been witnessed for quite some time (Oladosu, 2017). Examples can be drawn from East Timor, Southern Thailand, Southern Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan and the Balkans (McNamee & Muyangwa, 2021) where outbreaks of conflict have been caused largely by religion.

However, religion has also provided amazing conduits for peace building and this cannot be overlooked. Some religions like Buddhism, Islam and Christianity have values and faith teachings that encourage and motivate followers to resolve conflicts and peace building (Hidayat, 2023).

As asserted by Appleby (2000), although religion has been instrumental to violations of human rights, extremist violence and intolerance, it has been instrumental as well to conflict transformation in a non-violent way. It has defended human rights and, in some cases reconciled and restored stability and peace in broken societies.

In this regard, Smock (2016) cites the expression made by the American religious leaders in the 1980s during the nuclear-powered artilleries debate and the church's responsibility in the freeing of Eastern and Central Europe. Pope John Paul II a Christian leader, for example, spectacularly promoted justice and peace in several countries like Lebanon, Haiti and Poland (Oladosu, 2017). In Jerusalem-Patriarch Michel Sabbah; in Mexico-Bishop Samuel Ruiz; in the DRC-Archbishop Monswengo and East Timor-Bishop Belo. These church leaders have substantially contributed towards promoting justice and peace. Similarly, in the 1980s, the American Mennonites between the rebel group and the government of Nicaragua (Oladosu, 2017) brokered a peace agreement. In early Islamic period, Prophet Muhammad was both a spiritual and political leader, mediating disputes between warring tribes like Aws and Khazraj in Medina through the Constitution of Medina document that institutionalized religious coexistence and community arbitration (Watt, 1956). His leadership laid the foundations of Islamic conflict resolution through justice (adl), reconciliation (sulh) and mutual consultation (shura) values that continue to influence Islamic leadership globally (Esposito, 1998). As Islam expanded, so did the role of religious leaders in maintaining peace among communities displaced.

During the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258), Islamic scholars developed schools of thought (madhhab) that formalized dispute resolution practices, providing guidelines for addressing civil disputes, protection and integration of non-Muslim minorities within Islamic territories (Oladosu, 2017).

During the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922), religious courts (sharia courts) functioned as centers for mediating family, land, trade and inter-ethnic conflicts. Qadis (Islamic judges) appointed under sultanate were empowered to offer rulings grounded in Islamic jurisprudence while

accounting for the ethnic and religious diversity of provinces like the Balkans, Anatolia and the Maghreb (Hallaq, 2005).

Globally, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) where protracted conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have led to mass displacement, Islamic scholars (ulama) and community imams have acted as intermediaries between displaced people and host communities (Philpott, 2017). In Jordan and Lebanon imams have been instrumental in facilitating community dialogue between Syrian refugees and local people using Friday sermons (khutbahs) to promote messages of tolerance, coexistence and non-violence (UNHCR, 2017). The religious leaders partner with humanitarian organizations to spread peace-oriented teachings in Islamic values like compassion (rahma) and justice (adl).

In Europe, Islamic religious leadership adapted to support refugee integration following the influx of Muslim refugees from Afghanistan, Syria and North Africa into Germany, Sweden and Netherlands (McNamee & Muyangwa, 2020). Islamic leaders organized interfaith forums to prevent xenophobia, radicalization and inter-communal tensions. The Muslims Central Council in Germany worked with refugee mosques to mediate disputes between newcomers and local authorities to promote peaceful coexistence (Pew Research Center, 2016).

In South Asia, Islamic leaders assumed frontline roles in conflict prevention within camps in Bangladesh. In Cox's Bazar, imams and madrasa teachers have been involved in community-based dispute resolution, counselling traumatized refugees and mediating family disputes and tensions over scarce resources (International Crisis Group, 2019).

The moral authority has maintained social order and prevented further outbreaks of violence in overcrowded refugee settlements. They helped de-escalate tensions between refugees and law

enforcement through appeals rooted in Islamic ethics and community responsibility (maslaha) (Philpott, 2017)

In Africa, religious actors have actively played a role in processes of peace to augment conventional diplomatic peace missions (Marie et al., 2017). In Nigeria, activities of Boko Haram have displaced millions of people in the north-eastern region. Islamic leaders in Borno and Yobe states worked in Internally Displaced camps to calm inter-ethnic tensions and counter extremist ideologies. The Peace Ambassadors Programme supported by the Nigerian Interfaith Mediation Centre delivers anti-violence messages based on Qur'anic teachings (USAID, 2019).

Somalia experienced decades of civil war, resulting in massive internal displacement and refugee outflows to neighbouring countries. Islamic religious leaders (*ulama*) and traditional clan elders have become central to dispute resolution and peace building (Philpott, 2017). The Shari'a courts which gained substance in Mogadishu filled the vacuum left by state collapse by offering swift and culturally familiar conflict resolution mechanisms rooted in Islamic law (Menkhaus, 2016). These courts played a role of spiritual and judicial authority, promoting reconciliation through *sulh* (reconciliation), *afwan* (forgiveness) and *maslaha* (public interest). Somali religious leaders have worked in conjunction with customary law systems (xeer) to settle disputes among displaced groups over land, cattle and revenge killings (Menkhaus, 2016).

In Ethiopia, Islamic religious leaders have been instrumental in mitigating border conflicts with Oromia and reconciling pastoralist groups over land and water access during drought-induced displacements. The Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia with Muslim clerics has led community-mediation initiatives in refugee-zones of Dollo Ado and Jijiga (UNHCR Ethiopia, 2021).

During 2020-2021 clashes, Muslim leaders in Oromia and Somali regions conducted peace sermons and initiated community dialogues with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

These platforms used Islamic teachings to promote forgiveness and sacredness of human life (hurmat al-insan) an effort that helped reduce retaliatory violence among displaced people (UNHCR Ethiopia, 2021).

In Sudan, the civil war between Muslims in the North and Christian/animist in the South left millions of people displaced and communities disjointed along ethnicity, religious and regional lines. During Darfur conflict (2003 to date) where interethnic violence and displacement were widespread, Islamic clerics emerged as key figures working through mosques and local councils to promote peace among displaced Muslim communities between Arabs and Fur tribes (Modi et al., 2019). These leaders invoked Islamic teachings on peace, justice and brotherhood to mediate disputes in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and to counteract extremism that fueled the violence. Sudanese Scholars' Corporation and Sufi brotherhoods (Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya) orders used Qur'anic dialogue and religious traditions to advocate for peaceful coexistence (Flint & de Waal, 2015).

South Sudan was designated as the world's youngest nation in 2011, the first time the people of South Sudan experienced becoming one nation (Jok, 2020). However, the joy of the people only lasted a few years (Pendle, 2021). In 2013, South Sudan faced a civil war triggered by a power struggle between President Salva Kiir (Dinka ethnicity) and Vice President Riek Machar (Nuer ethnicity) (Modi et al., 2019). These two political leaders are the key actors responsible for the conflicts due to political problems in South Sudan. It indicates that political tensions, power struggles, and controversial political decisions have been the main triggers of the conflict in the country (McNamee & Muyangwa, 2020).

Violence and insurgency quickly spread to military bases and other areas. The civil war lasted for more than 20 years forcing people to flee to neighboring countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya,

Sudan, and Uganda (McNamee & Muyangwa, 2020). The people of South Sudan have been victims of widespread human rights violations, including ethnically targeted violence, extrajudicial killings, sexual and gender-based violence, recruitment and use of children in armed groups, and attacks on health facilities, schools, patients, and medical staff (Wilson, 2019).

During civil wars, international, local and religious actors have played an essential role as peacemakers (McNamee & Muyangwa, 2020). This fact depicts that these actors have participated in peace building efforts in South Sudan. The important role of religious leaders highlights the "strategic peace building" approach, recognizing the complexity of conflict and the importance of engaging multiple actors and strategies to achieve sustainable peace (Zink, 2017). One of the outcomes of religious leaders' engagement was mediating the signing of a peace agreement in September 2018, known as the R-ARCSS (Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan). This agreement, signed by Presidents Kiir and Machar to prevent a return to conflict, took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Stamnes & de Coning, 2022). Then, what caught the authors' attention while the country was newly independent and struggling to build a new government, the emergence of civil war caused prolonged internal chaos in South Sudan. In addition to regional actors, religious actors and institutions have remained active during the period of violence and chaos since 2013 in South Sudan (Stamnes & de Coning, 2022). Religious leaders serve as a critical tool in uniting the entire South Sudanese society, ending the conflict, and achieving sustainable peace both within communities and nationally. However, Christian and Muslim religious leaders represent most religious leaders

In Rwanda, while the 1994 genocide is analyzed through an ethnic lens between the *Hutu* and *Tutsi* communities, Muslim leaders played a quiet but vital role in post-genocide reconciliation.

Though Muslims were minority, their mosques became sanctuaries for both *Hutu* and *Tutsi* seeking refuge during the violence (Jok, 2020). After the genocide, Islamic leaders worked with interfaith peace building organizations to support survivors and returnees through counseling, trauma healing and moral education based on Islamic principles of mercy (rahma), compassion and truth-telling(Jok, 2020). Rwandan Muslim Association (AMUR) initiated reconciliation dialogues in communities and encouraged unity through sermons and Qur'anic programs that condemned vengeance. As a result, Rwanda saw an increased conversion rate to Islam after the genocide as many found in the Islamic community a model of compassion (Longman, 2010).

Since 1959, Uganda has continually been a host to refugees coming from different countries such as Rwanda, DRC, Burundi and (South-) Sudan. The 2006 Refugee Act and 2010 Refugee Regulations grant refugees the freedom to move, to work and to enjoy access to social services – leading to the description by international media as 'one of the best places in the world to be a refugee' (BBC 2016). Uganda is currently host to more than 800 000 South Sudanese refugees, of which the large majority is settled in the northern districts (GoU and UNHCR 2019). As of April 2025, Uganda is hosting approximately 1.85 million refugees and asylum seekers, making it the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa (UNHCR, 2025). The majority of these refugees about 57% originate from South Sudan, while 32% come from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with the remainder from countries such as Somalia, Burundi, and Ethiopia (UNHCR, 2025; The Guardian, 2025).

Most South Sudanese refugees are settled in Uganda's northern districts, including Adjumani, Yumbe, and Moyo (GoU & UNHCR, 2019). Notably, around 80% of the refugee population comprises women and children, with over half being under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2025). Despite Uganda's progressive refugee policy that grants access to land, education, and

employment, the country is facing immense pressure due to limited resources and escalating humanitarian needs. Funding shortages have led to severe gaps in food aid and basic services, prompting urgent appeals from the government and UNHCR for increased international support to sustain Uganda's globally recognized refugee response (WFP, 2025; UNHCR, 2025). The governance of the settlements is coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) that works in close cooperation with UNHCR, NGO's and community-based organizations.

The choice to carry out our research activities in Northern Uganda and Adjumani district in specific is driven by the historical and socio-economic characteristics of the area and its inhabitants. Although refugee-host relationships are generally qualified as 'peaceful' (World Bank 2016), experts caution that 'what happens in reality is not as exemplary as has been reported in the media' (Titeca and Schiltz 2017), as especially the Northern region is characterized by conditions of structural underdevelopment. Because of the influx of the South Sudanese refugees, the district population has doubled. Already in 2014, Refugee Law Project (RLP) cautioned about 'looming conflicts with the host communities on issues of land, sharing water points, school facilities and toilets' (2014). In the meantime, thousands of additional refugees have settled a situation that weighs heavily on the local population and its wider environment. Still, the local population is well-known for its hospitality. To a large extent, their welcoming attitude is influenced by the history of cross-border movement that people within this border region share.

Because of the area's decades-long instability, many of the South Sudanese have sought refuge in Uganda before. The other way around, after the downfall of Idi Amin in 1979, the Ugandan Madi's were persecuted and crossed the border of southern Sudan. As the refugee camps got attacked by the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA), most of them returned home by 1986-

1988, where again they were confronted with atrocities, this time by Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (Allen and Reid 2015). As a consequence, many of the Ugandan clan chiefs and elders are compassionate and understanding of the refugees' situation. In forced migration studies, refugee camps are often described as 'the materialization of the state of exception' (Agamben 1998). Following this line of thought, camps are 'non-places', imposing a condition of immobility on refugees while being displaced (Diken 2004).

Islam in Uganda dates back to the 1840s when it was introduced through coastal trade networks and formalized under the reign of Kabaka Mutesa I of Buganda (Nkurunziza, 2016). Over time, Islamic leaders developed structures for governance, education and justice including dispute mediation roles they play today. Conflicts in South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia have led to influx of refugees in different regions of the country. Conflicts over land allocation, access to humanitarian services and inter-group rivalries have arisen (UNHCR, 2020). In response to rising numbers, the country adopted a refugee policy which grants refugees freedom of movement, right to work and access to social services.

This approach promoted the development of refugee settlements camps in the different regions of the country; Nakivale, Rwamwanja, Kyaka II, Bidibidi and Kyangwali where ethnic and religious pluralism coexist with competition for limited resources (UNHCR, 2022). In these settlements, during conflicts, religion plays an important role in restoring peace by shaping values, influencing behavior and offer moral values that promote peace, reconciliation and social cohesion (Appleby, 2000). In refugee settlements, religion acts as a source of identity and a force for collective healing. Christians and Muslims leaders provide spiritual support, psychosocial counseling and conflict mediation through interfaith dialogue and community peace initiatives (Basedau, & De Juan, 2018). Islamic religious leaders (Imams, sheikhs and Qadhis) have

emerged as influential mediators especially among Muslim-majority refugee communities from Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Their position as trusted moral guides enables them to play a unique role in informal justice systems. Drawing on Islamic principles; sulh (reconciliation), shura (consultation) and adl (justice), leaders mediate household disputes, address tribal and inter-ethnic tensions among youth on peaceful conduct (Deng 2018).

1.1.3 Theoretical perspective

This study is informed by the S.N.T Model which is one of the theories formulated for Conflict management and resolution traditionally; the "S" stands for a fundamental principle in Islamic religion which is "Shura"(Consultation) which implies that consulting others before implementing any action or change, such an approach minimizes disagreement. The second principle, "N," stands for 'Nasiha," which means advice; in this context, advice can be offered to all parties involved if sincerely given. Third, it changes the feel and fosters a shared understanding of the warring parties.

The last element, "Ta'awun," denoted by "T," indicates cooperation, which is essential for the change process to promote healthy communication. Accordingly, Ahmad Khaliq postulated it in the year 2007(Hakim, Abdul. 2018). In another word, the model is proactive and conducive to positive outcomes of conflict; and is very much relevant to the topic under study; this is due to the existence of shura, a consultative council of experts on a relevant and particular matter (Hakim, Abdul. 2018).

The nature of shura is to consult with non-partisan individuals alongside stakeholders and parties involved in the conflict. While Advice (Nasiha) in this model is similar to the salam concept, in this situation, involved parties are given advice or feedback toward corrective action, thereby increasing the probability of a favorable outcome (Hayati, Keumala and Indra Caniago. 2017).

Based on the consultation and advice, concerned parties are encouraged to cooperate for good (Ta'awun); the cooperation aims to create a positive atmosphere and reduce possible tension resulting from the conflict. This model seems to be relevant to the study because it focuses on the application of Islamic approaches to conflict situations which, if it works properly in our society, the results are expected to be positive, that is to say, conflict must be relegated to the minimal level despite the tendencies of contemporary challenges that might affect the process.

1.1.4 Contextual perspective

The study was conducted in Kyangwali Settlement located 60 miles from Hoima Town in south-western Uganda (Lomo, Zachary.2019). Kyangwali Settlement is close to Lake Albert, which borders the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As of March 2016, the settlement houses approximately 42,262 individuals including refugees and asylum seekers. The settlement has been in operation since the early 1960s, hosting Rwandese refugees fleeing violence in the Rwandan Revolution in 1959 and then Congolese fleeing after Patrice Lumumba's assassination in 1961. Since then, there have been influxes of Rwandese, Congolese, Sudanese, and small numbers of Kenyans and Eritreans (Lomo, Zachary.2019). Refugees currently arriving are Burundian, Congolese, and South Sudanese. The settlement is divided into sixteen villages, separated by nationality and date of arrival in the settlement. To ease administration, the Office of the Prime Minister, Department of Refugees, divided the villages into Area A and Area B, with Area A having nine villages and the base camp under its jurisdiction, while Area B constitutes seven villages on the other side of the settlement, with a second administrative office (Kaiser, 2022).

Refugees govern themselves through Refugee Welfare Councils (RWC). The RWC III is the overarching office that is comprised of one councilman and a committee of twelve; they oversee

RWC II offices, each with their own councilman, in all sixteen villages. In addition, each village has approximately fifteen blocks, with each having their own chairperson, enabling some form of decision making being allotted to the refugees themselves. In Kyangwali, there are different operational partners that provide services (Sytnik, Svetlana. 2017). The Government of Uganda (GOU) and OPM are the main governing bodies, which manage the administration of the settlement. UNHCR processes refugees and delivers services, including allocation of rations through the World Food Programme (WFP). AAH-U is the main implementing partner for UNHCR in the settlement, but there are also different international organizations that deliver services (Omata and Kaplan, 2013). Organizations include the American Refugee Council, the Finnish Refugee Council, Samaritan's Purse, the International Organization on Migration, the Refugee Law Project, Save the Children, and WFP.

Even if Uganda is commended for its open-door policy and integration efforts, there are still various challenges faced by refugees in Kyangwali refugee camp. Overcrowding, inadequate healthcare and educational facilities, and limited access to clean water and sanitation are persistent issues (Natwijuka, 2019). According to a recent report by UNHCR (2022), refugees in Kyangwali have expressed dissatisfaction with the quality and accessibility of services, highlighting the need for improved coordination, increased funding, and innovative solutions to meet the growing demands. Despite the efforts by various stakeholders to ensure effective service delivery in the area, Kyangwali Refugee Settlement continues to face challenges related to conflict and social cohesion. The influx of diverse ethnic and national groups ranging from Congolese and South Sudanese to Burundians has created a complex social landscape where intercultural misunderstandings and competition over limited resources fuel tensions. Conflicts commonly arise over access to land, food rations, water points and health services (Sytnik,

2017). These conflicts are complicated by historic grievances among different ethnic groups, as well as the hierarchical power structures within the Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs) which some refugees perceive as biased (Kaiser, 2022). Gender-based violence (GBV), family disputes and youth delinquency are among persistent concerns, worsened by the trauma of displacement and the lack of psychosocial support systems (Natwijuka, 2019).

Religious leaders such as pastors, priests, sheikhs and reverands within refugee communities also play a significant role in dispute resolution (Lwanga-Ntale, 2020). They are considered to be of good moral standing and neutral since they stand for unity and harmony among the people and are highly respected. They use prayer and counseling as a tool to resolve parties' issues. In Kyangwali Settlement, the Burundian and Rwandese communities reportedly seek religious assistance in the first instance and only when that fails do they resort to RWC (Betts, et al, 2019). The presence of Muslim communities from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Burundi has led to establishment of mosques and religious councils within the settlement (Omata & Kaplan, 2013).

The imams and sheikhs employ Qur'anic principles such as *sulh* (reconciliation), *adl* (justice), *rahma* (compassion) and *shura* (consultation) to mediate disputes among refugees (Maliamungu, 2009). These teachings emphasize peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and the resolution of disputes through dialogue and forgiveness. Friday sermons (khutbahs) address moral behavior, the importance of unity among Muslims of different nationalities and the Islamic obligation to avoid discord (*fitna*) and oppression (*zulm*)-messaging that reinforces communal harmony (Kaiser, 2022). Notable instances of successful conflict resolution include the mediation of land disputes between Congolese and South Sudanese refugees where mosque leaders negotiated shared usage agreements that reduced tension in Area A and the intervention in a domestic

violence case where the imam worked with the family to counsel the husband, reduce tension, and restore family stability (Natwijuka, 2019).

1.2 Problem statement

Kyangwali Refugee Settlement has become a hotspot for social tension and inter-ethnic conflict due to its rapid population growth and diversity. The settlement is home to over 120,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Burundi (OPM, 2022). While Uganda's refugee policy grants refugees rights to land, movement and work, conflict over these entitlements has intensified due to limited resources, poor service delivery and ethnic rivalries (UNHCR, 2022). Cases of land disputes between Congolese and South Sudanese refugees in Kasonga and Malembo villages have escalated into physical confrontations (Refugee Law Project, 2021). According to the OPM Conflict Reports (2021), over 350 cases of intra-community disputes were recorded within a 12-month period with 40% unresolved due to capacity gaps in the RWC system. In addition, 1 in 5 cases of gender-based violence (GBV) go unreported due to mistrust in formal mechanisms (UNHCR, 2022). Domestic violence, teenage pregnancies and theft compound the settlement's social instability. The Refugee Welfare Council (RWC) system designed to ensure governance and conflict resolution struggles to manage disputes. Although, the Refugee Welfare Council leaders are elected, they lack formal training in dispute resolution work with minimal support from OPM (Natwijuka, 2019).

Islamic religious leaders have emerged as influential actors in peace building and use religious teachings to promote reconciliation, forgiveness and nonviolent resolution. For example, in Rwenyawawa village domestic conflict involving a Congolese family was peacefully resolved after intervention by the Sheikh who facilitated prayer-based counseling sessions and communal dialogue based on Qur'anic principles of patience and mercy (Maliamungu, 2009). In Kyeeba

village, an inter-ethnic land dispute was resolved involving a Burundian and Congolese family after Islamic leaders mediated the dispute with support from community elders and organized a joint community prayer to rebuild trust between the two families (Sytnik, 2017). Despite their proven capacity to reduce tension and promote peaceful coexistence, Islamic religious leaders remain unrecognized by formal governance bodies like the Office of the Prime Minister, Office of the Commissioner for Refugees and Refugee Welfare Council system. Their efforts are informal and lack institutional support and integration into the broader refugee response strategy. It's upon this background that this study sought to assess the impact of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda; a case study of Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

1.4 Study objectives

The following study objectives guided the study:

1) To evaluate the use of Islamic doctrinal teachings in conflict resolution among refugees in Kyangwali Settlement
2) To examine the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement
3) To analyze community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1) To evaluate the use of Islamic doctrinal teachings in conflict resolution among refugees in Kyangwali Settlement
2) To examine the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement
3) To analyze community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

1.6 Justification of the study

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction. Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, home to over 120,000 refugees (Office of the Prime Minister [OPM], 2022), has witnessed rising tensions due to competition for limited resources, land disputes and social unrest. While the Government and its partners have put in place formal governance systems, these structures are overstretched, under-resourced and lack training in dispute resolution (Natwijuka, 2019). As a result, alternative mechanisms for conflict resolution have emerged including Islamic religious leaders in mediating disputes, promoting reconciliation, and promoting peaceful coexistence within refugee communities Sytnik, 2017). However, their contributions are unrecognized in peace building frameworks. Their exclusion limits sustainability of conflict resolution, despite their relevance within the community. Without recognition and collaboration with governance institutions, the potential of Islamic religious leaders to contribute meaningfully to long-term peace building remains untapped. Therefore, this study is justified in assessing the impact of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in Kyangwali in refugee settlements

1.7 Scope of the study

It consists of the geographical scope, content scope and time scope

1.7.1 Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Kyangwali Refugee located in Kibuube District (formerly Hoima District) in western Uganda. Kyangwali Refugee Settlement was selected because of its significant refugee population diversity and the complex array of challenges it faces in providing satisfactory services to displaced individuals. It has a population of about 42,262 refugees.

The settlement is comprised of Congolese, Southern Sudanese, Rwandese, Burundians, Kenyans and Sudanese from Darfur. Refugees are settled in mixed communities and no specific areas are given to particular nationalities.

1.7.2 Content scope

The focus of this study was limited to the impact of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda. The independent variable Islamic religious leadership conceptualized in terms of; Islamic doctrines and principles, Islamic leadership structures, community trust and Islamic leadership styles. Whereas the dependent variable is conflict resolution with; reduced violent incidents, resolved disputes, Social cohesion and Peaceful cohabitation as its dimensions

1.7.3 Time Scope

The study covered the period between 2019 and 2024. This timeframe was selected because it marks a period of population growth and increasing incidents of conflict within Kyangwali Refugee Settlement due to new waves of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.

1.8 Significance of the study

The findings of the study will be of utmost importance to various stakeholders in the following ways:

Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

The study may aid the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in developing inclusive conflict resolution strategies. The findings may contribute to the formal recognition and empowerment of religious leadership within existing frameworks and promote collaboration between institutional and community-level actors.

Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs)

The study shall be instrumental in informing the RWC system on how to work collaboratively with Islamic religious leaders in addressing local disputes. Since RWCs lack formal mediation skills, the study may advocate for the inclusion of faith leaders as complementary agents of conflict resolution. It may also propose structured engagements between RWCs and religious institutions, thereby improving the effectiveness, cultural sensitivity and legitimacy of mediation processes at the community level.

Islamic Religious Leaders and non non-Muslim

Importantly, for Islamic Religious Leaders and non non-Muslim, this research will inform refugees and asylum-seekers on their rights and also advocate increased awareness of their rights in countries of asylum. Additionally, the research findings will provide recommendations on how non-Muslim can improve their current understanding and utilization of international law to improve the treatment of refugees. Furthermore, the findings shall serve as a basis for recommending targeted capacity-building interventions which may enhance their impact and bridge gaps between informal and formal systems.

Policy Makers

It is evident that the successful resolution of refugee crises involving Muslims requires the incorporation of Islamic principles of asylum and refugees into policies and practices in both

Muslim and non-Muslim states. For this reason, this research has significant implication to policy formulation on refugee protection

Muslim states

This study also ascertains the importance of presenting recommendations to Muslim states on how to improve their current regulations and laws on refugees, especially regarding the application of Islamic law in dealing with refugees

Refugee Communities

The study shall benefit the refugee communities themselves by promoting inclusive governance and conflict-sensitive approaches rooted in their lived realities. Through the recognition and strengthening of religious peace builders, refugees may gain improved access to culturally acceptable mediation channels, reduced social tension, and enhanced community trust.

Academicians and scholars

This research is important to scholars because it will improve the body of literature on refugees in Islamic law and international law because the current evidence is limited in its use of Islamic principles on refugees and asylum. According to Munir, scholars on refugee protection and status continue to ignore Islamic law even though it provides more protection to asylum seekers and refugees than international law. In this regard, this research will invoke dialogue and research on how to enhance the understanding of the role of Islam in the protection of refugees

1.9 Organization of the study

This study comprises five chapters. Chapter one unveils the problem which informs the study and its context. This contains the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study and organization of the study. Chapter Two contains description of the theoretical framework and empirical literature. Chapter

three describes the research, methodology, procedures for data collection and analysis. It also clarifies on validity and reliability of the study without forgetting the ethical consideration of the study. Chapter four comprises presentation of findings, and discussion of findings and Chapter five comprises summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the review of related literature on assessment of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda. The chapter comprises the theoretical and literature review thematically structured in line with the study objectives. The literature review consists of materials obtained from published research, textbooks, journals, magazines, and any internet sources which are relevant and provide a thorough background to this study.

2.1 Literature survey

This section focuses on the review of studies related to Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda. The studies enabled the researcher to identify the gaps which the study has closed. Conflict in refugee settlements is a common phenomenon driven by competition over limited resources, ethnic diversity and socio-cultural differences. One such study is by Kyeswa (2017), titled *"*Faith-Based Actors in Uganda's Refugee Response. An emerging role in Peace building conducted under the Refugee Law Project (RLP), Makerere University. The study focused on Nakivale and Kyangwali refugee settlements and examined how faith-based actors contribute to peace building and conflict resolution. The objectives of the study were to examine the role of faith actors in refugee communities, assess their engagement in peace building and their interaction with formal governance systems. The study employed a qualitative methodology and used a case study design. The study population included religious leaders, humanitarian workers and refugee community members. Purposive sampling was the

main technique employed using a sample size 30 respondents. The data collection tools were focus group discussions, document reviews and interview guides.

The study findings revealed that Islamic leaders frequently mediate land disputes, family conflicts and inter-ethnic disagreements using religious teachings grounded in the Qur'an. Their involvement was seen credible and acceptable among Muslim refugees. However, their efforts remained informal, lacked institutional recognition and were unsupported by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The study recommended formal engagement of faith leaders in the refugee governance framework.

Natwijuka (2019) conducted a study on "Assessment of Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Refugee Settlements: A Case Study of Kyangwali Refugee Settlement" submitted to Uganda Martyrs University, examined the effectiveness of both formal and informal conflict resolution mechanisms in managing disputes among refugees. The purpose of the study was to assess the functionality of governance mechanisms, to evaluate the contribution of informal actors and identify existing gaps in conflict resolution. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design; the study targeted RWC leaders, religious leaders, OPM officials and general refugees. A sample of 100 respondents was selected using a combination of stratified random and purposive sampling techniques. Structured questionnaires and interview guides were used as the main data collection instruments

The findings of the study revealed that while RWC structures exist to handle disputes, they are overwhelmed, under-trained and lack logistical support. Refugees indicated greater trust and confidence in religious leaders especially Islamic clerics. The study further noted that Islamic leaders were instrumental in mediating domestic violence cases, land-related disputes and inter-tribal tensions through sermons, dialogue sessions and Qur'anic guidance. However, Kyeswa's

findings, Natwijuka's study concluded that Islamic religious leaders operate in isolation without formal collaboration with humanitarian agencies or government structures. Recommendations included the need to build capacity among religious mediators, facilitate their integration into existing conflict resolution systems, and strengthen coordination between formal and informal governance mechanisms.

While Kyeswa (2017) and Natwijuka (2019) provide valuable information into the involvement of Islamic religious leadership in refugee conflict management, there are gaps that need to be filled. Both studies focused on the role of religious leaders as informal actors without conducting evaluation of the impact of Islamic doctrinal teachings on conflict resolution process. Secondly, neither study provided analysis of the religious leadership hierarchy or how its organizational framework contributes to peace building within refugee contexts. Both studies did not examine community trust in religious leaders and its influence on the mediation. The present study addresses these gaps by assessing Islamic religious leadership; evaluate doctrinal and community trust on Islamic peace building mechanisms in conflict resolution. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods will strengthen the findings and offer recommendations for integrating Islamic peace building approaches into formal refugee governance.

2.2 Theoretical review

Since the study is about the role of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda, therefore the following are some of the theories which explain how the Islamic religious leadership can influence the public and change their minds and attitude toward a certain conflict or misunderstanding or violence which faces the society.

2.2.1 The S.N.T Model

This study is informed by the S.N.T Model which is one of the theories formulated for Conflict management and resolution traditionally; the "S" stands for a fundamental principle in Islamic religion which is "Shura"(Consultation) which implies that consulting others before implementing any action or change, such an approach minimizes disagreement. The second principle, "N," stands for 'Nasiha," which means advice; in this context, advice can be offered to all parties involved if sincerely given. Third, it changes the feel and fosters a shared understanding of the warring parties. The last element, "Ta'awun," denoted by "T," indicates cooperation, which is essential for the change process to promote healthy communication. Accordingly, Ahmad Khaliq postulated it in the year 2007(Hakim, Abdul. 2018). In another word, the model is proactive and conducive to positive outcomes of conflict; and is very much relevant to the topic under study; this is due to the existence of shura, a consultative council of experts on a relevant and particular matter (Hakim, Abdul. 2018).

The nature of shura is to consult with non-partisan individuals alongside stakeholders and parties involved in the conflict. While Advice (Nasiha) in this model is similar to the salam concept, in this situation, involved parties are given advice or feedback toward corrective action, thereby increasing the probability of a favorable outcome (Hayati, Keumala and Indra Caniago. 2017). Based on the consultation and advice, concerned parties are encouraged to cooperate for good (Ta'awun); the cooperation aims to create a positive atmosphere and reduce possible tension resulting from the conflict. This model seems to be relevant to the study because it focuses on the application of Islamic approaches to conflict situations which, if it works properly in our society, the results are expected to be positive, that is to say, conflict must be relegated to the minimal level despite the tendencies of contemporary challenges that might affect the process.

2.2.2 Conflict transformation theory

This study is informed by the conflict transformation theory developed by Lederach (1997). The theory centres on transforming deep-rooted violent conflicts into peace, constructed on a distinctive comprehension of peace building and proposes the use of the concept of conflict transformation to replace conflict resolution (Rupesinghe, 1995). Conflict transformation theory is employed here as differentiated from conflict resolution and conflict management theories through its thrust on the quest for systemic change. In refugee settlements, this theory is relevant as it seeks to transform not just the actors involved but also the institutions, leadership structures, and social systems through which conflicts are sustained. Given that most conflicts in refugee settlements occur within a public and multicultural context, conflict transformation requires changing the prevailing socio-political and cultural context (Paffenholz et al., 2009). Within this, Islamic religious leadership becomes vital agent of transformation, guiding both refugee and host communities towards peace through values-based interventions and moral authority.

According to Lederach (1997), this implies that conflict transformation theory should extend past the proximate conflict site to become a conflict-in-context theory. Islamic leaders do not merely resolve individual disputes but engage in reshaping community norms, attitudes, and relationships using Islamic principles like *sulh* (reconciliation), *adl* (justice) and *shura* (consultation). Their leadership is integral to changing the settings and social structures that caused or perpetuated conflict (Lederach, 1997). This theory is premised on the understanding that conflict results from concerns of inequality and injustice conveyed by competing economic, cultural, and social structures (Lederach, 2000). Islamic religious leaders working in refugee settlements confront these structural issues through both spiritual and socio-cultural mechanisms advocating for equity, mediating resource-based disputes, and addressing injustices arising from

marginalization and identity-based exclusion. Contemporary conflicts require more than negotiation and mediation; they require long-term engagement that redefines the relationships and systems underpinning conflict. Therefore, conflict transformation seeks to reshape interests and relationships while dismantling orders that sustain violence. It emphasizes justice and fairness values central to both Islamic teachings and peace building theory and promotes human dignity and mutual respect through religious ethics (Lederach, 1996).

2.2.2 The use of Islamic doctrinal teachings in conflict resolution among refugees

Forgiveness is the most valued Principle in Islam; it is held high in matters of conflict, both on a personal and public level. No matter how evil the offense is, it has been given preference over anger and revenge. The glorious Qur'an stated that: "And who shun the most heinous sins and abominations, and who, whenever they are moved to anger readily forgive" (Q42:37) It is expressed in the glorious Qur'an as "Afw" 'Ghafara,' and 'Maghfira' means to pardon, waiver of punishment and Amnesty (Ahmad 2017), Maghfira means to cover, to forgive and to remit. The glorious Qur'an does not limit forgiveness only to significant conflicts. Instead, it also mentions Forgiveness and Kindness as a matter of interaction among individuals and communities to cultivate peace and harmonious relations within the society. The prophet's life (S.A.W.) also reflects an unwavering commitment to acts of forgiveness and mercy, despite all the brutalities carried out by opponents. Forgiveness is a transformative process, simultaneously aiding in attaining other virtues associated with it.

Here forgiving others while being in power is a sign of generosity and humility. Therefore, Forgiveness in Islam is not just forgetting and moving on but also an attempt to improve relationships with adversaries and gain their respect and trust (Abdul Hamid, 2017). Therefore, the application of forgiveness in the contemporary period should be a matter of concern to all,

especially in our respective communities and mostly in dealing with one another. However, there are a lot of existing issues bothering family relations, friends, brothers and sisters, which bring misunderstanding and often lead to clashes which need to be addressed using the Islamic approach of forgiveness because it heals the heart if it is accepted, it also builds a new and improved relationship. It fades away personal grudges (Abdul Hamid, 2017).

Reasoning, Thinking and Reflecting (Ta'qul, Tafk'ur, Wa Ta'mul)

Reasoning, thinking and reflection are known as Ta'qul, Tafk'ur, wa Ta'mul in Islam. Critical thinking is considered a prized virtue. Critical thinking is an essential prerequisite for any dialogue and conflict resolution process (Abu Nimer, 2013). It is the ability to engage in reasoned discourse with intellectual standards such as clarity, accuracy, precision, and logic. Islam considers knowledge essential for spiritual and mental development; however, knowledge without creativity and critical thinking are vain (Abdul Hamid, 2017). Moreover, creativity has been an integral part of Islamic reconciliation and conflict resolution.

This can be seen in a prophet's (S.A.W.) novel approach to resolve the disagreement between tribes of Makkah regarding the replacement of the black stone of Ka'abah. However, what is happening in most of our Communities today concerning the pursuit of knowledge and reasoning is unbecoming and has not been unconnected with lack of thinking and pounder on life experiences coupled with ignorant attitudes towards Islamic knowledge; you may find an area within a Muslim community whereby every one cares not with the condition of his neighbour and less privileged no one cares with destitute as well orphans who lose their parents, these are severe problems needs to be solved using critical thinking, reasoning and reflections if we want to have ideal Muslim communities.

Non-violence (Rifq wa Al- Rahma)

Islam prefers non-violence over violence; almost all the essential virtues revealed in the Qur'an like patience, Kindness, Forgiveness, truth, generosity, and respect for human life and dignity are also guiding principles for modern-day nonviolent strategic action. Each time individuals or communities disagree or face a conflict; there are two approaches to conflict resolution: violent and nonviolent methods. Violence leads to destruction, anger and hatred, whereas non-violence makes way for peaceful means, avoiding violence and confrontation (Saleem, M.A 2018). The glorious Qur'an attaches great importance to patience in all human affairs, for instance: "And follow what is revealed to you, and be patient until Allah issues His judgment for He is the best of Judges" (Q10:109). Also, in another place in the glorious Qur'an, Almighty Allah says: "And be patient Allah will not waste the reward of the virtuous" (Q11:115). The better way to solve our present societal and communal problems is through the application of a non-violence culture; we are now in a severe dilemma of moral decay carefree attitude towards security, which affects every angle of today's life, particularly in Northern Region, the only way out is to go back to the actual teachings of Islam and mold our behavior and that of our youth it is only if we understand our problem then a solution would be determined. We have already possessed the values and principles in our religion and practice, which is non-violence as a tool for peace-building and conflict resolution (Saleem, M.A 2018).

Consultation (Shura)

Shura means mutual consultation in a society; it is among the other four fundamental principles of Islam such as justice, equality, and human dignity, mutual consultation however is; solidarity in society is based on the principle of free consultation and genuine dialogue, reflecting equality in thought and expression of opinion (Sadek, 2007). Similarly, inclusiveness and participation are integral elements of any process of conflict resolution and peace. Instead, any attempt or

effort towards peace will be futile if it is exclusive and hierarchical in nature and benefits only a few. Likewise, consensus building and consultation are essential ingredients that make conflict resolution and peace-building strategies democratic. The glorious Qur'an attaches great importance to mutual consultation and consensus-building and has, therefore, introduced the principle of shura. Thus; "Those who answer their Lord, establish the prayers and their affairs are by consultation, who spend of that which we have given them" (Q42:38). Therefore, shura is one of the approaches used to obtaining peace and harmonious relationships in a Muslim community; it is also widely used for social cohesion among the Muslim Ummah a long time ago, making decisions and taking action. Likewise, in a contemporary era, it is still an essential tool for organizing and uniting the Muslim community; despite all the challenges facing Muslims today, the relevance of Shura consultation cannot be over-emphasized since it minimizes conflict and leads to a positive atmosphere.

Conciliation (Sulh)

Islam promotes peace and harmony both at the interpersonal and communal levels. Muslims are expected to settle their clashes and disagreements in a nonviolent manner using a conciliation approach. "Sulh" is an Arabic word that means cleaving to peace or moving towards Peace (Irani, 2019). Accordingly, the glorious Qur'an and Sunnah provide that Muslims are supposed to settle their conflicts and disagreements with peace thus: " In most of their secrets talks, saved him with orders, charity, or kindness or conciliation between mankind and he who does this seeking the good pleasure of Allah, we shall give him a great reward" (Q4:14). Therefore, conciliation, especially in conflict, is required to attain a successful living (Kabir, 2018). Contemporarily "Sulh" has been there in our midst, playing a significant role of bringing peace, harmony, and stability, reducing hatred and personal grudges. However, it encourages mutual

respect and intimacy among one another, provided Islamic injunctions apply it. Therefore, today's Muslims, especially in refugee settlements, would benefit from conciliation if they truly followed and practiced the Islamic approach to conflict resolution.

Activism and Advocacy (Nusrat Al-Haq)

Islam as a religion lays down foundational principles towards a peaceful and just society and has also stressed upon putting these values and principles into practice for the empowerment of weak and oppressed ones (Abu Nimer, 2013). In Islam, passivity is looked down upon, and there is excellent support for dynamic social activism in terms of individual duties and sense of social responsibilities. In addition, these traits are also among the factors distinguishing true Muslims from others as they compete for goodness. In another place in the Qur'an, it states thus: "What reason could you have for not fighting in the way of Allah, for those men, women and children who are oppressed and say "O Lord take us out of this city whose inhabitants are wrongdoers! It is a clear indication from the above verses that whatever the conditions might be, all Muslims are obliged to lend a helping hand to the oppressed people (Ahmad 2017)". So also Zakah and Sadaqah serve as Mechanisms in Islam that relate to social and individual responsibility for the betterment of the poor, needy, orphan, and destitute. Therefore, Muslims are expected to show an excellent example of brotherhood endurance and establish a spirit of truthfulness and virtuous acts no matter what condition they might find themselves in.

Kindness (Al-Ihsan)

Peace-building approaches generally try to create an atmosphere where everyone is respected and valued. Equality for all humans, respect for human dignity and constructive behavior and communication among individuals is of great importance for the success of any peace building (Kabir, 2018). In the Islamic framework of Peace, Kindness provides the basis for constructive

behavior both in Peace and conflict situations and constitutes one of the basic themes in the Qur'an. It is mentioned that: "is there any reward for Ihsan other than Ihsan"(Q55:60). Forgiveness, struggle to fight evil, oppression, charity, and generosity are all considered acts of kindness. Acts of Kindness within Islam are limited to humans, but rather animals and other creatures were inclusive. The act of kindness today can be seen as waterloo by fear of poverty and economic hardships; people are now scared of becoming poor, thinking that if they extend kindness to others, their richness will go away, not knowing that the wealth of a person has never decreased due to charity given (Sadek, 2017). Therefore Muslims are being encouraged daily to extend an act of kindness and all its categories to enable the less privileged to live peacefully. If this approach can be adequately handled, our respective communities will be better living places.

Truth-seeking (Clarification)

Truth-seeking in matters of dispute and its resolution holds great importance in any peacemaking effort to be sustained. There is great emphasis in Islam to be truthful in all matters, and to be truthful, it is mandatory to seek knowledge of the truth. Islam is based on knowledge and does not accept ignorance (Muhsin, 2019). Dismiss any thought of equality between those who know and those who do not" (Q39:9). The life and tradition of prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) also upholds truth, truthfulness and truth-seeking both in action and word, particularly during Conflict. Truth is the fundamental ethic and essence of the Islamic religion; if the truth is missing in a Muslim's actions or words, his worship lacks sincerity. Not only will his religious acts, but even mundane affairs also lack merits. However, the application of truth seeking in our present time has been very significant in shaping the minds of Muslims, especially if one looks at how Muslims interact, transact and conduct some activities of today's life. We are now facing the

challenge of moral decay and deceitful act. If this approach can be utilized properly, it will build a sense of confidence and acceptance in the Mind of all (Muhsin, 2019).

2.2.4 The influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution

Hemphill and Coons in 1957 defines leadership as the behavior of individuals who direct the activities of group to achieve common goals. From the Islamic perspective, leadership style should be based on two strongest basis, namely the Quran and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad. Musta'in (2014) concludes in his research at University Darul Ulum Jombang that four indicators of spiritual leadership as siddiq, amanah, fathanah and tabligh give a real contribution to spiritual leadership. The test results found that spiritual leadership improves the employee performance. Studies of Fry (2011) states that purpose of spiritual leadership is to create a vision and values among organization members, empowering the team to create maximum performance of organization. David (2014) conducted a study in Malaysia with result that quality of Islamic leadership has a positive effect on performance of the members. The results of this study further shows that Islamic leadership qualities contribute to achievement of higher performance than the Islamic insurance agent.

In a world increasingly divided by conflicts, with escalating tensions in America, Europe, and the Middle East, the quest for effective conflict resolution leadership is more critical than ever. In the realm of Islamic leadership and conflict resolution, there is a significant underrepresentation of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) methodologies, particularly in relation to SDG 16. This gap is highlighted in the existing body of literature, where Islamic historical leadership practices are often disconnected from modern conflict resolution frameworks. Notable studies (Sinensky, J. (2015) emphasize the practical and theoretical aspects of Islamic peace

building and the contemporary diplomatic applications of Islamic values, yet the broader academic discourse often overlooks these contributions.

The works of Said, et al, (2022) and Sandal, et al, (2022) delve into the richness and variety found within Islamic narratives in the realm of peace building. These studies explore the evolving nature of Islamic peace studies, examining how religion can aid in establishing peace and stability, and highlighting the vital roles played by women in Islamic communities in peace efforts. They collectively emphasize the necessity of incorporating a range of Islamic viewpoints in global peace dialogues. Additionally, research on faith-based peace building methods is particularly significant in the context of countries. The impact of religious leaders and communities in post-conflict scenarios is the focus of studies by.

Islamic leadership is spiritual and moral in nature, anchored in divine principles derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. According to Al-Aidaros, Shamsudin and Idris (2018), Islamic leadership is built on Tawhid (oneness of God) and the duty of the leader to uphold justice, accountability, and service to humanity. In contrast to secular leadership models that emphasize control or strategy, Islamic leadership is value-driven and oriented toward achieving social harmony and ethical governance. Leaders are viewed as trustees (khalifah) who are accountable not only to their followers but ultimately to God.

As such, Islamic leaders are expected to resolve disputes through fairness (adl), consultation (shura), and wisdom (hikmah), which are all emphasized in Qur'anic teachings. This framework supports their role in conflict resolution as moral exemplars and impartial arbiters who are guided by principles that transcend political or ethnic boundaries (Al-Aidaros et al., 2018).

Conflict resolution within the Islamic worldview is not a peripheral practice but a central responsibility of leaders. The Qur'an and Hadith provide numerous injunctions that encourage

peace, reconciliation (*sulh*), and the prevention of fitnah (social disorder). Abu-Nimer (2013) argues that Islam presents a comprehensive model of peace building based on nonviolence, forgiveness, and restorative justice. Furthermore, Islamic teachings advocate for community-based conflict management through respected local leaders who act within both spiritual and communal authority. These teachings emphasize a preference for arbitration (*tahkim*) and collective deliberation (*shura*) in resolving disputes both of which emphasize reconciliation over retribution (Abu-Nimer, 2013). This foundational guidance reinforces the legitimacy of Islamic religious leaders in addressing communal conflicts in displacement settings where modern legal systems may not be accessible or trusted.

Religious leadership in Islam functions not only as a moral authority but also as a unifying force within diverse communities. As stated by Al-Khalifa and Aspinwall (2021), Islamic religious leaders serve as spiritual guides and community mediators who are central to maintaining societal cohesion. They do this by reinforcing collective identity through sermons, public dialogue, and the dissemination of shared religious values. This cohesive function is particularly evident in fragmented societies, such as refugee settlements, where Islamic leaders are often among the few trusted authorities who can speak across ethnic, national, or tribal divisions. Their ability to invoke shared beliefs and ethical norms enables them to de-escalate tensions and mediate disputes before they spiral into violence. Hence, even at a conceptual level, Islamic religious leadership is inherently equipped to support peaceful coexistence and conflict transformation (Al-Khalifa & Aspinwall, 2021).

Building upon the conceptual foundation of Islamic leadership and its moral obligations in maintaining justice and peace, it is essential to examine the specific structures and institutions within Islamic religious leadership. These structures range from formal and institutionalized

leadership organs. Each of these components contributes to peace building within refugee settlements. They are discussed under

Imams

Imams serve as the frontline religious leaders in Muslim communities tasked with leading prayers and offering spiritual guidance. Their role extends beyond religious rituals to encompass social and moral leadership, especially in conflict situations. Imams frequently act as mediators where they are accessible and trusted figures within families and neighborhoods. Their approach is grounded in Islamic teachings that emphasize forgiveness, patience, and reconciliation (Alam, 2017). Studies in diverse Muslim contexts, including refugee settings in Sudan and Somalia, have highlighted how Imams leverage their spiritual authority to encourage disputants to seek peaceful solutions through dialogue and communal harmony (Hassan, 2015). Their proximity to the community allows early intervention in conflicts, preventing escalation by promoting restorative justice (Esposito, 2010). This local engagement makes Imams indispensable actors in the informal justice system within refugee settlements (UNHCR, 2020).

Sheikhs (Shaykhs)

Sheikhs are senior Islamic elders recognized for their deep knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh). Unlike Imams, Sheikhs handle complex disputes involving extended families, clans, or broader social groups. Their role involves interpreting Sharia law to provide authoritative rulings and arbitration based on Islamic legal principles (An-Na'im, 2008). In various Muslim societies, Sheikhs have been documented as key figures in peace building processes in conflict-prone regions such as Northern Nigeria and Kenya’s refugee camps (Kale, 2016). Their influence stems from religious expertise and from social standing which enables them to command respect and compliance among resistant parties (Bariagaber, 2014). Sheikhs chair conflict resolution

committees or religious councils, guiding negotiations and ensuring decisions uphold religious legitimacy (Abdullah, 2013).

Qadi (Islamic Judge)

Qadis represent the formal judicial arm of Islamic leadership, adjudicating disputes according to Sharia law. In many Muslim countries, Qadis operate within state judicial frameworks, but in refugee or informal settings, they function through customary or religious councils (Musa, 2011). Their judgment is grounded in scriptural interpretation and carries moral and legal authority, contributing to community trust in the fairness of outcomes (Rahman, 2009). While formal Qadi courts might be absent in settlements, elder Qadis or their informal equivalents mediate disputes related to marriage, inheritance and property (UNDP, 2016). Their role ensures that resolutions conform to Islamic legal standards which increases acceptance and reduces recidivism of conflicts (Albrecht & Khan, 2017). The impartiality and scriptural basis of Qadi rulings make them vital in maintaining order and justice in Muslim refugee communities.

Religious Councils or Shura Councils

Religious councils (Shura councils) consist of religious leaders, including Imams, Sheikhs, and community elders who collectively deliberate on communal matters and disputes. The Shura system is deeply embedded in Islamic governance traditions, emphasizing consultation (shura) as a means to achieve justice and consensus (Esposito, 2010). In refugee contexts, Shura councils function as advisory and mediating bodies that consider diverse perspectives to produce inclusive conflict resolution outcomes (Hassan, 2015). Their consultative nature enhances transparency and community buy-in, making them more effective in managing conflicts that span beyond individual families to affect entire neighborhoods or ethnic groups (UNHCR, 2020). By liaising

with local government or humanitarian actors, Shura councils help bridge formal and informal dispute resolution systems, contributing to broader peace building efforts (An-Na'im, 2008).

Muftis

Muftis are Islamic legal scholars tasked with issuing fatwas-non-binding religious rulings that guide believers on complex matters of faith and social conduct. Though their role is more formal and based in institutional settings, opinions influence grassroots conflict resolution by clarifying theological positions on justice, peace, and reconciliation (Rahman, 2009). For example, fatwas on forgiveness and coexistence have been used to legitimize peace initiatives in conflict-affected Muslim communities in Indonesia and Pakistan (Alam, 2017). In refugee settlements, Muftis' guidance shape attitudes towards mediation processes, encouraging parties to accept compromise within Islamic ethical frameworks (Musa, 2011). Thus, Muftis provide an important doctrinal foundation that supports the work of on-the-ground leaders like Imams and Sheikhs.

Community elders and religious influencers

In addition to formal Islamic leadership, respected community elders who may not be formally trained religious scholars play roles in conflict mediation. These elders possess moral authority based on age, experience, and knowledge of local customs (Hovil & Werker, 2005). Their ability to blend Islamic values with indigenous traditions makes their mediation efforts culturally sensitive and effective in refugee camps (Bariagaber, 2014). Community elders' involvement ensures resolutions are appropriate, accommodating both religious and traditional expectations which foster compliance and social harmony (Kale, 2016).

This section has examined the role of Islamic religious leadership structures in facilitating conflict resolution among refugee communities. Drawing from empirical literature, it is evident that these religious figures wield influence due to their spiritual authority, communal trust and

rootedness in both Islamic and cultural norms. Imams and Sheikhs play foundational roles in promoting peace through daily sermons and direct mediation; Qadis administer justice based on Sharia law; Muftis issue binding religious guidance (fatwas); while Shura Councils and elders foster inclusive dialogue and participatory decision-making. From a researcher's perspective, the credibility and acceptance of these leaders within refugee settings surpass that of formal legal systems in contexts where state mechanisms are weak or inaccessible. However, while their contributions are commendable, challenges may limit the effectiveness of religious leadership in complex or cross-cultural conflicts. Thus, it is my view that Islamic religious leadership structures are not merely supplementary but foundational to the conflict resolution environment in refugee settlements. Strengthening these structures through capacity building, legal literacy, and inclusive practices could enhance their role as agents of sustainable peace

2.2.5 Community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution

Trust is a fundamental element in effective conflict resolution where formal judicial systems may lack legitimacy or accessibility. Sinensky, (2015) conceptualize trust as a willingness to be vulnerable based on positive expectations of another's intentions or behaviors. In mediation, trust enhances the acceptance of mediators' authority and the legitimacy of their resolutions (Said, et al, 2022). In Muslim communities, Islamic religious leaders serve as mediators, deriving their authority from spiritual legitimacy rooted in sacred texts and traditions (Sinensky, 2015). This dual foundation of interpersonal confidence and spiritual legitimacy creates a trust relationship that secular mediators may lack.

Islamic religious leaders derive their authority from the Qur'an and Sunnah, which emphasize justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shura*), and reconciliation (*sulh*) as key principles (Alam, 2017). The Qur'an encourages believers to resolve disputes amicably and highlights the role of trusted

figures in facilitating peace (Qur'an 4:35). These scriptural foundations promote inherent trust in religious leaders as legitimate mediators acting under divine guidance (Alam, 2017). Ethical qualities prescribed for leaders, such as truthfulness (*siddiq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), wisdom (*fathanah*) and effective communication (*tabligh*), shape community perceptions and expectations, contributing to confidence in their fairness and moral integrity (Alam, 2017). Islamic religious leaders integrate into their communities through daily rituals, social support, and educational roles, fostering familiarity and trust (Hassan, 2015). Empirical studies in Muslim refugee settings demonstrate that community members prefer mediation by religious leaders due to shared identity, which reduces suspicion and resistance (UNHCR, 2020). The presence of Imams and Sheikhs within neighborhoods strengthens their role as respected interlocutors who understand the cultural and historical grievances underlying conflicts.

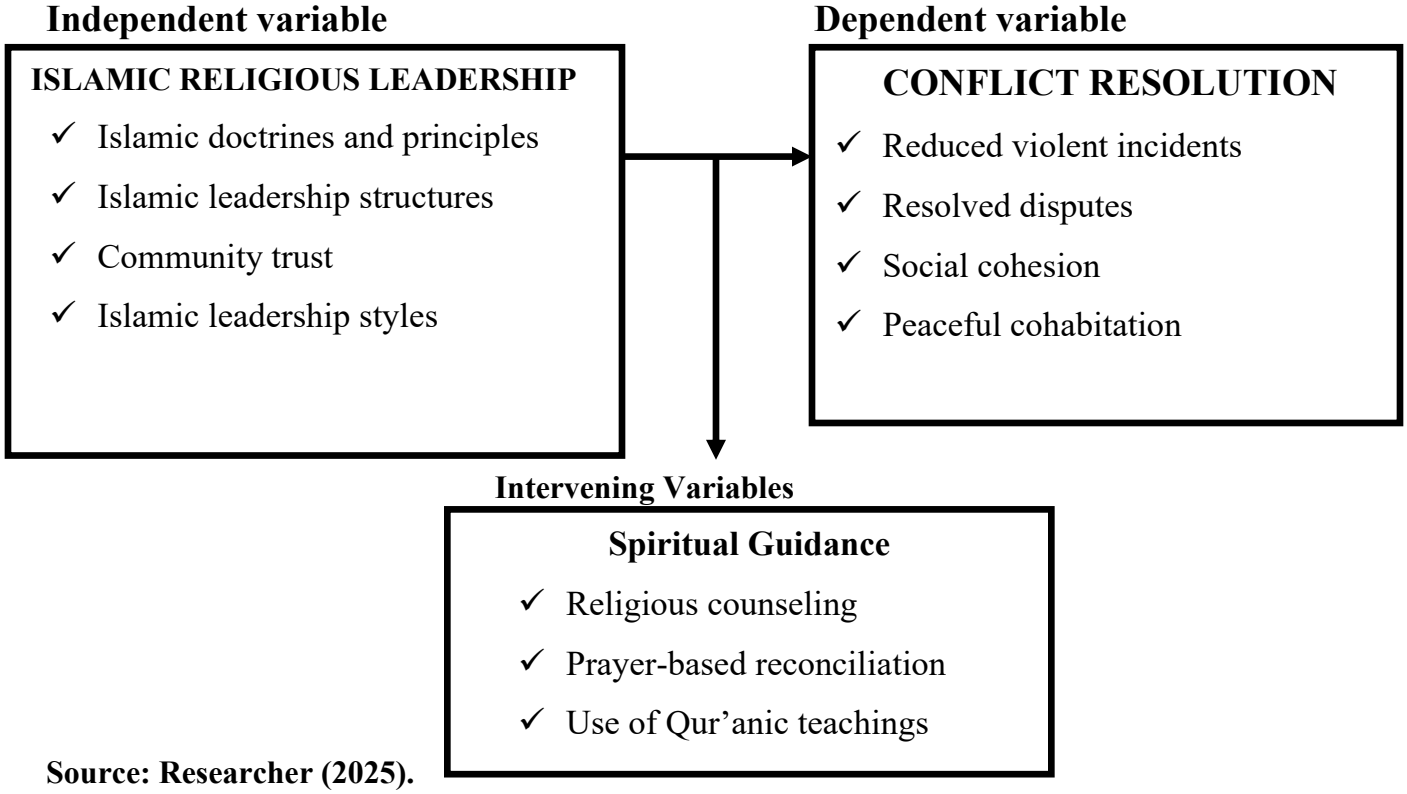
Trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators is contingent upon their perceived impartiality and fairness. Refugees often harbor skepticism towards formal institutions perceived as biased along ethnic or political lines. Religious leaders viewed as neutral and unbiased garner greater trust and compliance from conflicting parties (Omata and Kaplan, 2013). This perceived fairness is linked to their commitment to Islamic jurisprudence, emphasizing equity and justice for all parties regardless of social or ethnic background (Sandal, et al, 2022). Leaders demonstrating integrity reinforce community confidence in their role, making them effective mediators capable of bridging divides even in entrenched conflicts. However, maintaining impartiality is an ongoing challenge in heterogeneous refugee populations with complex and shifting allegiances and grievances (Rahim MA 2020).

Effective communication is vital in fostering trust during mediation. Islamic religious leaders rely on oratory skills and knowledge of Islamic teachings to frame conflict resolution messages.

Their ability to articulate principles of forgiveness, patience and reconciliation in resonant terms enhances credibility and persuasiveness (Zakari et al, 2020). Leaders employing empathetic listening, emotional intelligence and negotiation tactics inspire confidence in disputants, enabling acceptance of compromises and restorative solutions (McNamee, & Muyangwa, 2020). Clear communication promotes transparency in the mediation process, reducing misunderstandings and suspicions that undermines trust. Strengthening skills through formal training without compromising spiritual authenticity can increase the effectiveness of Islamic leaders in complex and evolving refugee conflict scenarios.

Community trust is also shaped by the relationship between Islamic religious leadership and formal conflict resolution mechanisms (Smock, 2016). While religious leaders serve as first responders in disputes, lack of institutional recognition and support can limit their capacity and sustainability. Trust in these leaders can be enhanced through synergy between traditional religious mediation and humanitarian frameworks (Lwanga-Ntale, 2020). Collaborations, including formal referrals, capacity building, and joint peace building initiatives, lend religious mediators greater legitimacy and resources. Marginalization of Islamic leadership from formal peace processes can weaken community confidence, signalling a lack of recognition for the mediators' roles and expertise (Al-Khalifa, & Aspinwall, 2021).

2.6 Conceptual framework



Source: Researcher (2025).

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

In this study the conceptual frame work diagrammatically shows the relationship between the independent variables that may influence the dependable variable. The researcher considers Islamic doctrines and principles, Islamic leadership structures, Community trust, Islamic leadership styles as the indicators of the independent variable which is conflict resolution is considered by the researcher to be the dependable variable since it may be influenced by Reduced violent incidents, Resolved disputes, Social cohesion and Peaceful cohabitation. When the independent variables are applied will influence conflict resolution.

Conclusion

Chapter Two has laid the groundwork for the research, providing a solid theoretical foundation and a thorough review of existing studies. It highlights the use of Islamic doctrinal teachings in conflict resolution among refugees and the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in

conflict resolution. However, it also analyzes community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution. The conceptual framework offers a comprehensive outlook, integrating various elements that shape the assessment of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda. In the study's next chapters, the insights from this chapter were crucial for examining how Islamic religious leadership works and reduce conflict in refugee settlements

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the research design, the study population, the sample size, sampling techniques, methods of data collection, procedure of data collection, data management and analysis, reliability and validity of the research instruments as well as data processing and analysis among others.

3.1 Research approach

A research approach is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine the relevance of the research purpose with economy in a procedure (Kothari, 2002). This study employed a mixed method approach (quantitative and qualitative approach). The researcher used qualitative approach of data collection and analysis so as to capture the details and adequate information. This is due to the fact; qualitative research seeks to tell the story of a particular group's experiences in their own words and is therefore focused on narrative. According to Kothari, (2002) quantitative research tends to be more exploratory in general. The use of both methods ensures that the data is effectively interpreted using the numbers, figures as well as the narrative. According to Kothari, (2002) both qualitative and quantitative tends to be more exploratory in nature, seeking to provide insight into how individuals understand aspects of their worlds.

3.2. Research Design

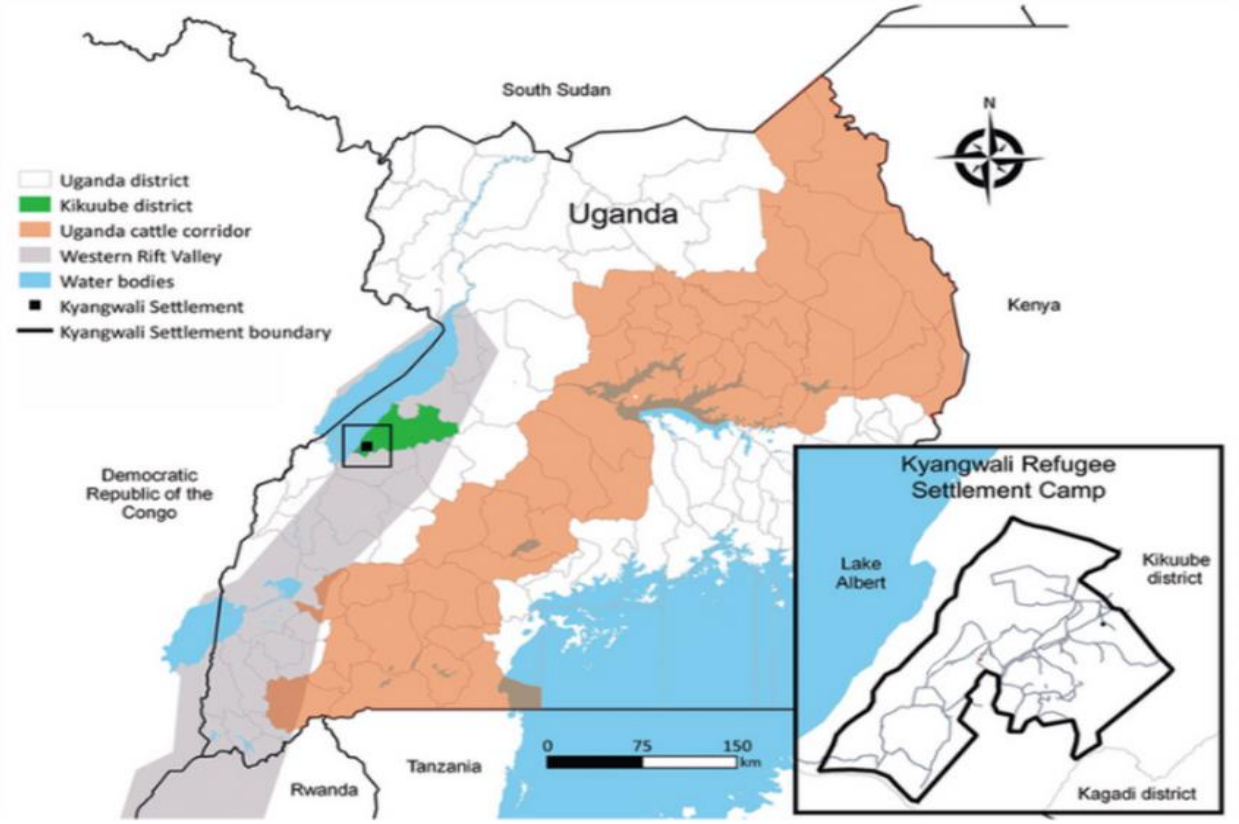
Creswell and Garrett (2008), research design serves as a blueprint that guides researchers in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. It provides a structured plan outlining the methods and procedures for data collection and analysis. The choice of research design is determined by

the research objectives. For this study, a case study design was adopted as it best suits the research goals. This method is chosen because it is valuable, has distinctive characteristics that includes relevant evidence, looks at different interpretations of the situation, identifies the most significant aspects in the area under study and calls for the use of the researcher's prior expert knowledge to further the analysis.

3.3 Study area

The study was carried out in Kyangwali Refugee located in Kibuube District (formerly Hoima District) in western Uganda. Kyangwali Refugee Settlement was selected because of its significant refugee population diversity and the complex array of challenges it faces in providing satisfactory services to displaced individuals. It has a population of about 42,262 refugees. The settlement is comprised of Congolese, Southern Sudanese, Rwandese, Burundians, Kenyans and Sudanese from Darfur. Refugees are settled in mixed communities and no specific areas are given to particular nationalities.

Figure 1: Study Area-Map of Kyangwali Refugee located



3.4 Target Population

The term population' refers to a well-defined group from which a sample can be drawn and which is specified in very concrete terms (Neuman, 2000). An example of a population can be a person, a group, an organization, written document or symbolic message, or even a social action under investigation. The study targeted Office of the Prime Minister OPM, Kyangwali Refugees, Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs), Islamic Religious Leaders and Office of the Commissioner for Refugees and other religious institutions. As of March 2016, the settlement housed approximately 42,262 individuals including refugees and asylum seekers. The study population of 260 respondents was derived from the various sections of the responsible offices

3.5 Sample size

Sample size refers to the number of observations or individuals that are included in a study or experiment. It is the total number of subjects or items that are selected and analyzed from a population (Gannon, et al., 2019). The sample size for this study was 155 respondents sourced from Kyangwali Refugee located in Kibuube District. The sample size emanates from entire population of Kyangwali Refugee located in Kibuube District because this is the population affected with issues of disputes. This sample size is always taken as appropriate especially in a research study which is positively oriented in social sciences. The sample size has been determined using Krejcie & Morgan tables as reflected in Appendix III.

Table1 3.1: Sampling frame

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling Technique
Islamic Religious Leaders	30	20	Purposive Sampling
Refugee Community Members	150	90	Stratified Random Sampling
Settlement Leaders/Local Elders	40	20	Purposive Sampling
OPM & Humanitarian Officials	25	10	Purposive Sampling
Youth and Women Representatives	15	15	Census
Total	**260**	**155**	

Source: Primary data (2025)

3.6 Sampling techniques

According to Sekaran, (2003) sampling is the process of choosing the research units of the target population, which are to be included in the study. The study adopted both probability sampling method where all elements have an equal chance of being selected and Non-probability sampling, a method where some elements of the population have no chance of selection (these are sometimes referred to as 'out of coverage'/'under covered'), or where the probability of selection can't be accurately determined, it involves the selection of elements based on

assumptions regarding the population of interest, which forms the criteria for selection (Mellenbergh and Adder, 2003). So, the study specifically used the following sampling techniques:

3.6.1 Purposive sampling

The purposive sampling technique was utilized to arrive at the respondents intended to participate in the research. Therefore, purposive sampling technique was used to identify respondents for the study. Moreover, these respondents were purposively selected from OPM & Humanitarian Officials, Settlement Leaders/Local Elders and Islamic Religious Leaders. Those selected in this category provides the required in-depth information since their selection is based on their appropriateness to give the required information.

3.6.2 Stratified Random Sampling

Stratified Random Sampling is a probability sampling technique used in research when the population is divided into distinct subgroups (called strata) that share similar characteristics, and then samples are randomly selected from each subgroup. For this study, Stratified random sampling ensures representation across different subgroups (e.g., age, gender, location, business type). The population is divided into meaningful strata and respondents are randomly selected from each stratum to enhance representativeness. This technique was used to select Refugee Community Members

3.6.3 Census

Census sampling is a method of data collection where every member of the target population is included in the study, rather than selecting a sample. This technique is used when the population is small, manageable, and each individual's input is considered critical for the completeness or

accuracy of the research. Census sampling means all 15 individuals (Youth and Women Representatives) are included in the sample to ensure their voices are fully captured.

3.7 Data Collection Sources

The researcher used two sources of data that is, Primary and Secondary data. Primary data was obtained from the field using interviews and questionnaires methods and the secondary data was obtained from the existing materials including, published text books, journals, magazines, articles, reports, internet and newspapers.

3.8. Data Collection Methods

Data collection is the systematic process of gathering information from multiple sources to achieve specific research objectives or answer research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research study applied surveys and interviews and document review as data collection methods;

3.8.1. Survey Method

According to Price, P. C., & Jhangiani, R. S., (2020), surveys are research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. This instrument was administered to all valid respondents and it captured socio demographic characteristics of respondents, and their responses towards assessment of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda. This instrument was used because it collects a lot of data in little time. Surveys were close ended and were used to attract a large response of respondents from the population. The results given by the questionnaires were categorized and summarized accordingly.

3.8.2. Interview method

The interview method was selected because it allows the respondents to express their mind, allows the study of non-verbal communication and enables the researcher to avoid alienation from the respondent. It is also found to be flexible, with high response rate, easy to administer and ability to probe and seek clarifications during the interview (The interview guide was used as a research instrument, and it was constructed in such a way that it allows flexibility during the interviewing process. The interviews were conducted following a number of successive steps. Basically it involves selecting and approaching individuals, arranging time, date, duration and conditions of the interview. The respondents were selected basing on the criteria of knowledge about the subject in question. The researcher targeted 80 interviewees from all the categories of people that were targeted.

3.8.3 Document review

A document review in research is a particular kind of literature review that focuses on written documents as a source of data and information. A typical document review is doing a thorough search for and analysis of documents relating to a certain research question or topic. Government reports, scholarly publications, court records, letters, diaries, and social media posts are just a few examples of the many different sources that can be included in documents (Iacono et al., 2019). For the purpose of this study a researcher extracted data from established literature concerning Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda. The study has used scholarly publications, social media posts and other literature review from journal articles and books.

3.9 Data collection instruments

Several instruments were used for data collection, and these include self-administered questionnaire and interview guide

3.9.1 Self-Administered Questionnaire

The researcher used a Self- Administered Questionnaire with open-ended questions using Likert scale of measurement to collect data from all respondents except the corporate category. The self-administered questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale range from '1' for strongly disagree, '2' for disagree, '3' for not sure, '4' for agree and '5' for strongly agree. This method was used because it is easy to administer, and it allows literate respondents to give their views without fear. The researcher physically delivered the questionnaires to the selected respondents; alternatively the researcher also worked in collaboration with a few coordinators from within Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement to share the questionnaire with colleagues using the E-mail technology. The questionnaire contained five sections as follows: A-Background information; B- the use of Islamic doctrinal teachings in conflict resolution among refugees C- the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution; D- the community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution.

3.9.2 Interview Guide

A structured interview was designed in such a way that more specific and in-depth responses related to Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda are obtained from respondents. The interview guide was also developed in line with the study objectives. These interviews help the researcher to verify and substantiate information collected using questionnaires, and thus help to give validity to the data collected. This means that data collection was used as well because according to Amin, (2005) interviews give an opportunity to

probe and obtain detailed information on an issue. Structured and open-ended interviews were carried out whereby the key respondents were asked to either propose solutions or provide insight into events.

3.9.3 Document review checklist

A document review in research is a particular kind of literature review that focuses on written documents as a source of data and information. A typical document review is doing a thorough search for and analysis of documents relating to a certain research question or topic. Government reports, scholarly publications, court records, letters, diaries, and social media posts are just a few examples of the many different sources that can be included in documents (Iacono et al., 2019). For the purpose of this study a researcher extracted data from established literature concerning Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda. The study has used scholarly publications, social media posts and other literature review from journal articles and books.

3.10. Data Quality Control

The following criteria were applied to this qualitative and quantitative study in order to make the research credible that is reliability and validity. Respondents' checking was undertaken to give credibility to the analysis. It was up to the reader to determine whether the text has sufficient credibility/ vesimilitude to describe it as a quality piece of research.

3.10.1 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a study measures what it is supposed to measure. In other words, it is the degree to which a study accurately reflects the phenomenon it is intended to investigate (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2017). Validity of the content according to Amin (2004) is highly recommended for purposes of testing how valid a research is as a way of

controlling the use and effectiveness of the research instruments. For instance, the validity of any given study is crucial in establishing the relevance of the questions appearing on the questionnaires as well as the other interview manuals. This was therefore established before the study began. This assisted the researcher to focus on his intended objectives and expected outcomes during the study. The researcher liaised with the supervisor for guidance to ensure that most of the key instruments meet the validity threshold before the research was conducted. By doing so, key areas within the research tool which needed refinement and readjustment were identified and appropriate action taken before embarking on the real study

3.10.2 Reliability

Reliability of the study is defined by Golafshani (2003) as the extent upon which the results of a study would consistently remain accurate over a given period of time as far as the entire population which is represented under study is concerned. The reliability of a study is achievable only when the outcome of the study remains consistent over time and can be reproduced when subjected to a similar methodology. If the outcome can be reproduced, then that would be an indication of the reliability of the research instruments. For the purposes of achieving the reliability of the research instruments, a pilot study was undertaken by the researcher. Thereafter, a few adjustments were made on the questionnaires and interview schedule based on the realities that were found out during piloting of the research instruments.

3.11 Data collection procedure

Mesly (2015) noted that data collection procedure involves the systematic process of gathering quantitative and qualitative information on specific variables with the aim of evaluating outcomes actionable insights. Good data collection requires a clear process to ensure the data you collect is clean, consistent, and reliable. This study follows a randomized response technique

which Claes Wohlin (2003) states that allows researchers to obtain sensitive information while guaranteeing privacy to respondents. This method encourages greater cooperation from respondents and reduces their motivation to falsely report their attitudes. The researcher obtained a letter of introduction to go to the field from the Dean of School of Social Sciences of Nkumba University which was handed over to the authorities at kyangwali refugee resettlement seeking permission to be allowed to carry out the study in that organization.

3.12 Data processing and analysis

Data collected was standardized using various control measures, including checking for completeness and consistency before the data entry process. Questionnaires were coded and each questionnaire given a unique identification number before data entry. These numbers were entered and used as a check out for any inconsistencies in the data

3.12.1 Data processing

Data has no clear meaning unless it is analyzed and interpreted. Data analysis therefore gives raw data meaning and implications. Frankel and Wallen, (2000) states that data analysis involves a number of closely related operations which are performed with the purpose of summarizing the collected data and organizing it in a manner that answers the research questions. Data was edited to check for accuracy, reliability, consistency and completeness of completed questionnaires. Data was edited in the office after field work before coding, this was done to identify the errors in the completed questionnaires, and such errors include incompleteness, inaccurateness, inconsistencies and non-uniformity. Data got from various documents within and outside kyangwali refugee resettlement was carefully analyzed and compared with the responses from respondents in the questionnaires and interview guide to ensure completeness and accuracy before coding and capturing into the computer system for analysis. Bouma, G. D. (1996) lists the

operations of data analysis to include editing, coding, classification and tabulation. It also entails categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing data in order to find answers to the research questions.

3.12.2 Data analysis

The researcher used qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques for qualitative data, the analysis was carried out through using exploratory and descriptive methods while quantitative data, this was analyzed through descriptive statistics mainly percentages. The data collected from the field using questionnaires, interview schedules, and observation checklist was analyzed using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (correlation, regression and coefficients); Percentage was obtained from the frequency tables and correlation then the interpretation of the descriptive statistics.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations refer to the principles of right and wrong that are used to guide research practices. These principles include respect for autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice, and they require that researchers respect the rights and welfare of the participants, ensured that the research was conducted in a responsible and transparent manner, and contributed to the greater good (Bryman & Bell, 2019). The study approach took ethical issues into consideration at all times. All participants were asked for their informed permission, and confidentiality and privacy were ensured. The research was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the institutions.

3.14 Limitations of the study

The study focused on kyangwali refugee resettlement, and findings were not fully representative of the entire nation. Due to time and resource constraints, the study covered only the most recent

years, from 2010 to the present, potentially leaving out relevant historical context. The qualitative and quantitative research methods used limited the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. The accuracy and reliability of the data collected could be influenced by respondent bias or recall limitations. Language barriers and cultural sensitivities posed challenges during data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0: Introduction

This chapter presents findings and their analysis, interpretation as assessed from both primary and secondary sources of data. Tables with frequencies and percentages have been used to present and analyze the findings. The data collected from the field was processed and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. All findings were interpreted and presented based on the study objectives. The chapter begins by reflecting the basic characteristics of the respondents and then presents, analyses and interprets the findings in respect to objectives of the study. According to the study, a total of 155 questionnaires were printed and distributed to the selected sample. Out of these, 5 questionnaires were not returned, resulting in a total of 150 duly completed and returned questionnaires. This represents a response rate of approximately 96.8% which is considered adequate for analysis and interpretation of the study findings.

4.1: Characteristics of the Respondents

Analyzing the characteristics of respondents is essential because it helps to contextualize the findings of the study by showing the relevance and representativeness of the participants involved (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The purpose of this section was to analyze the background information of the respondents in relation to their age, gender, marital status, position held, duration in service, and level of education. The information is presented by the use of tables.

4.1.1: Age group of the respondents

To establish the age distribution of the study participants, respondents were requested to indicate their respective age brackets. The results are summarized in the table below,

Table 4.1: Age group of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
20 – 25	14	9.3	9.3
26 - 30 years	24	16.0	16.0
31 - 35 years	43	28.7	28.7
36 - 40 years	27	18.0	18.0
41 - 50 years	22	14.7	14.7
55 years and above	20	13.3	13.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings presented in table 4.1 indicate that majority of respondents, 43 (28.7%), were aged between 31 and 35 years, followed by 27(18.0%) aged between 36 and 40 years, and 24 (16.0%) aged between 26 and 30 years, 22(14.7%) within the 41 to 50-year age range, 20(13.3%) aged 55 years and above, while the youngest group, aged between 20-25 years, accounted for 14(9.3%). This implies that majority of respondents, aged between 31-40 years are within a critical stage of adulthood that entails active involvement in community affairs including life experiences with conflict situations and engagement in peace building efforts.

4.1.2: Gender of Respondents

To establish the gender distribution of the study participants, respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The results are summarized in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Gender of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	95	63.3	63.3
Female	55	36.7	36.7
Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2025

Findings in table 4.2 above shows that 95 (63.3%) were male and 55 (36.7%) were females. This shows that both male and female respondents were considered in this study. This implies that

the views captured in the study are largely shaped by male perspectives which may be attributed to their involvement in religious and community leadership roles. Nonetheless, the inclusion of both male and female respondents enhances the representativeness of the findings and has important implications for understanding the effectiveness and inclusiveness of Islamic religious leadership in promoting peace and social cohesion within refugee settings.

4.1.3: Highest level of education attended

To assess the educational background of the respondents, participants were asked to indicate their highest level of formal education attained. The results are summarized in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Highest level of education attended

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Primary Education	37	24.7	24.7
	Secondary Education	64	42.7	42.7
	Tertiary Education	44	29.3	29.3
	University	5	3.3	3.3
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 4.3 indicates that 64(42.7%) had attained secondary education, followed by 44(29.3%) with tertiary education, 37(24.7%) completed primary education, while 5(3.3%) had university-level education. This implies that most respondents have at least a secondary level of education, indicating a reasonable level of literacy to engage with complex topics such as conflict resolution and religious leadership. Although a few respondents had attained university education, the inclusion of respondents with tertiary and university qualifications contributes to the diversity of knowledge within the sample.

4.1.4: Marital status of the respondents

To understand the personal and social backgrounds of the respondents, they were asked to indicate their marital status. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 4.4: Marital status of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Single	44	29.3	29.3
	Married	50	33.3	33.3
	Cohabiting	35	23.3	23.3
	Separated	11	7.3	7.3
	Divorced	10	6.7	6.7
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2025

Marital status can affect individuals' involvement in community matters and their perspectives on conflict and reconciliation, as family responsibilities and social ties shape attitudes toward peace building. According to table 4.4 above, 44 (29.3%) of respondents were single, 50 (33.3%) were married, 35 (23.3%) were cohabiting, 11 (7.3%) were separated and 10 (6.7%) were widowed. This implies that majority of respondents are in stable partnerships, whether through marriage or cohabitation which may influence their social support networks and roles within the refugee settlement.

4.1.5: Occupation of the respondents

The study sought to identify the occupational roles or departments in which the respondents were engaged. The responses are presented in the table below.

Table 4.5: Occupation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Community Member	56	37.3	37.3
Religious Leader	17	11.3	11.3
Local Leader	14	9.3	9.3
Community Services	49	32.7	32.7
Humanitarian Official	14	9.3	9.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2025

Findings in Table 4.5 above show that 56 respondents (37.3%) were community members, 49 (32.7%) were engaged in community services, 17 (11.3%) identified as religious leaders, while 14 respondents each (9.3%) were local leaders and humanitarian officials respectively. This implies that majority are directly involved in the community through community service roles which positions them well to provide informed perspectives on the conflict resolution processes within the refugee settlement.

4.1.6: Duration in service

Table 4.6: Duration in service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year	41	27.3	27.3
	1 – 3 years	97	64.7	64.7
	4 – 6 years	12	8.0	8.0
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2025

In Table 4.6 above, 41(27.3%) reported having worked for less than one year, 97(64.7%) had worked between one and three years, while 12(8.0%) had worked between four and six years. This implies that majority of the respondents have recent experience in their current roles, having served between one and three years. This suggests that respondents were familiar with the current challenges within the refugee settlement,

4.2: To Evaluate the Use of Islamic Doctrinal Teachings in Conflict Resolution among Refugees in Kyangwali Settlement

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of findings on the first objective of the study which sought to evaluate the use of Islamic doctrinal teachings in conflict resolution among refugees in Kyangwali settlement. Tables with frequencies and percentages were used to analyze data collected on the first objective of the study.

4.2.1: Islamic teachings emphasize peace and reconciliation among conflicting parties

Respondents were asked to state their views on the extent to which Islamic teachings promote peace and reconciliation among conflicting parties and their responses were as summarized in table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Islamic teachings emphasize peace and reconciliation among conflicting parties

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Agree	41	27.3	27.3
	Strongly Agree	109	72.7	72.7
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to findings in table 4.7, 150 (100%) respondents agreed that Islamic teachings emphasize peace and reconciliation among conflicting parties. From the field, respondents held a shared understanding of Islamic values as key to promoting harmony and resolving conflicts. Islamic principles are not only respected but relied upon as moral guidance in settling disputes. Members of the community turn to religious teachings as a first step when conflicts arise and that these teachings shape how people perceive justice, forgiveness, and social responsibility. During an interview, A community elder explained, "In our settlement, when disagreements happen between neighbors over water points or household space, the sheikh usually sits both sides down and reminds them what the Qur'an says about being patient and settling matters with respect."

> *"The believers are but brothers, make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy."* (**Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat 49:10**)

4.2.2: Islamic teachings promote forgiveness over revenge in conflict situations

Respondents were asked to give their views on whether Islamic teachings promote forgiveness over revenge in conflict situations, their responses were summarized in table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Islamic teachings promote forgiveness over revenge in conflict situations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Agree	83	55.3	55.3
	Strongly Agree	67	44.7	44.7
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2025

Islamic teachings strongly emphasize forgiveness as a higher moral ground than revenge in resolving conflicts. The Qur'an encourages believers to pardon others, stating that forgiveness leads to greater spiritual reward (Qur'an 42:40). Result of findings in table 4.8 above indicates that 150 (100%) of the total respondents were in agreement that Islamic teachings promote forgiveness over revenge in conflict situations. This implies that the refugee community in Kyangwali embraces the Qur'anic principle of forgiveness as a means of resolving conflict and restoring harmony. Participants during interviews referred to the teachings they receive during Friday prayers (Jumu'ah), where imams preach about patience, forgiveness and avoiding revenge. For example, Sheikh Hassan Mubaje in his 2020 sermon on peaceful co-existence, stated: "Islam commands us to forgive those who wrong us. Revenge only breeds more hatred, but forgiveness opens doors to healing." Sheikh Abdul Karim Katende, from the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC), once said: In refugee communities where trauma is high, we remind our brothers and sisters that forgiving someone is not weakness, it is an act of worship and it brings peace to both the victim and the offender. Sheikh Abdullah Kamwimbi, religious leader in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, remarked during an interview:

"We counsel families in conflict by reciting Qur'an 41:34-'Repel evil with that which is better.' This softens hearts and brings enemies together."

4.2.3: The Qur'an provides relevant guidance on resolving disputes peacefully

Respondents were asked to give their views on whether the Qur'an provides relevant guidance on resolving disputes peacefully; their responses were summarized in table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: The Qur'an provides relevant guidance on resolving disputes peacefully

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	24	16.0	16.0	16.0
Disagree	21	14.0	14.0	30.0
Neutral	26	17.3	17.3	47.3
Agree	53	35.3	35.3	82.7
Strongly Agree	26	17.3	17.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Findings in table 4.9 above presents that 79(52.6%) of the respondents agreed that the Qur'an provides relevant guidance on resolving disputes peacefully. However, 26(17.3%) were neutral on the statement and 45(30%) were in disagreement. This implies that while majority of the respondents recognize the Qur'an as a source of peaceful conflict resolution, some respondents did not see its practical application in certain conflict situations within the refugee settlement. Some community members perceive religious teachings disconnected from the realities of the disputes they encounter like those involving resources, domestic tensions or ethnic divisions. Nonetheless, among those who agreed, many pointed to specific verses such as: "And if two parties of the believers fight, then make peace between them... Indeed, the believers are brothers. So make peace between your brothers" (Qur'an 49:9–10). This verse was cited by sheikhs and religious leaders in interviews as the foundational Islamic mandate for reconciliation. A respected elder in the settlement, narrated:

"Two families, one from Sudan and one from DRC were about to fight. I called them and read Surah Ash-Shura 42:40, where it says that forgiveness is better than revenge and those who forgive will be rewarded by Allah. This message made them both reflects and they agreed to reconcile."

4.2.4: Forgiving others is encouraged in Islam to improve relationships

Respondents were asked to give their views on whether forgiving others especially when one has power is encouraged in Islam to improve relationships; their responses were summarized in table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10: Forgiving others is encouraged in Islam to improve relationships

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	13	8.7	8.7	8.7
Disagree	24	16.0	16.0	24.7
Agree	44	29.3	29.3	54.0
Strongly Agree	69	46.0	46.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to findings in table 4.10 above, the majority 113(75.3%) of the respondents generally agreed that forgiving others, especially when one has power, is encouraged in Islam to improve relationships. However, 37(29.3%) of the respondents were in disagreement. This implies that while community members recognize forgiveness as an essential virtue in Islam for those in positions of authority, some respondents are unconvinced about its application in real-life situations. This means that for Islamic teachings on forgiveness to have a transformative impact, they must be modeled by leaders and community influencers. When those in power demonstrate humility and the willingness to forgive, it reinforces the credibility of Islamic conflict resolution

practices. However, if forgiveness is preached but rarely practiced by leaders, this can weaken community trust and limit the spiritual and social effectiveness of Islamic guidance in managing disputes. The findings are in line with Qur'anic teachings that emphasize the moral superiority of forgiveness by those in authority.

> Let them pardon and overlook. Would you not love for Allah to forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (Qur'an 24:22).

In Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, respondents shared that when local leaders or religious figures publicly forgive those who have wronged them; it creates a ripple effect of peace and unity. One South Sudanese elder remarked, "We once had a land dispute between two clans. The sheikh, who was also personally offended in the matter forgave the wrongdoers and urged the others to do the same. That day, everyone dropped their bitterness." However, others voiced concern. "Sometimes leaders say we should forgive," "but when someone wrongs them, they use their power to retaliate or exclude. That confuses us." Islam acknowledges that human beings are prone to error, conflict, and emotional reactions, but it encourages believers to rise above these instincts through patience, forgiveness, and reconciliation. As emphasized in the Qur'an: *"Repel evil with that which is better; then indeed, the one between whom you and him is enmity will become as though he were a devoted friend"* (Qur'an 41:34).

4.2.5: Islamic leaders serve as mediators in resolving interpersonal or community conflicts

Respondents were asked to give their views on whether Islamic leaders serve as mediators in resolving interpersonal or community conflicts; their responses were summarized in table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Islamic leaders serve as mediators in resolving community conflicts

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	36	24.0	24.0	24.0
Disagree	13	8.7	8.7	32.7
Neutral	7	4.7	4.7	37.3
Agree	67	44.7	44.7	82.0
Strongly Agree	27	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Findings in Table 4.11 show that 94(62.7%) agreed that Islamic leaders serve as mediators in resolving interpersonal or community conflicts. However, 7(4.7%) were neutral and 49 (32.7%) disagreed with this statement. This implies that respondents acknowledge the mediating role of Islamic leaders in conflict resolution; however, some respondents expressed dissatisfaction indicates varying experiences with how these leaders fulfil that role. Although Islamic leaders are widely respected as moral and spiritual authorities, their effectiveness as mediators may depend on how present, impartial, and approachable they are within community. This means that for Islamic religious leadership to have a meaningful impact on conflict resolution in Kyangwali settlement, leaders must go beyond symbolic roles and engage with the community. Their visibility, fairness and willingness to mediate across tribal, ethnic and gender lines influence the trust and reliance people place in them during times of conflict. The Surah Al-Hujurat (49:9) instructs that:

> "And if two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them… with justice and act justly. Truly, Allah loves those who are just." This verse places a responsibility on community leaders to mediate conflicts fairly and equitably. It also affirms that justice, sincerity and engagement are essential attributes for any effective

Islamic mediator. Kyangwali settlement where tensions are magnified by displacement and scarcity, this principle offers both a moral compass and strategy for restoring harmony.

During an interview, One South Sudanese youth shared;

When conflicts happen between older men, the sheikhs come and intervene. But when it's us young people or women involved, they ignore it or tell us to be patient." Such sentiments reflect a gap between expectation and actual practice which may contribute to the skepticism expressed by some of the respondents.

4.2.6: Most refugees accept Islamic approaches to resolving conflicts

Respondents were asked to give their views on whether most refugees accept Islamic approaches to resolving conflicts; their responses were summarized in table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12: Most refugees accept Islamic approaches to resolving conflicts

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	10	6.7	6.7	6.7
Disagree	8	5.3	5.3	12.0
Neutral	11	7.3	7.3	19.3
Agree	83	55.3	55.3	74.7
Strongly Agree	38	25.3	25.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Findings in table 4.12 above presents that 121(80.6%) of the respondents generally agreed that most refugees accept Islamic approaches to resolving conflicts. Though 11(7.3%) were neutral on the statement and 18(12%) of the respondents disagreed. This implies that the majority of the refugee community in Kyangwali recognizes and embraces Islamic methods such as mediation, forgiveness and reconciliation as effective tools for managing disputes. This highlights the influential role Islamic teachings and leaders play in promoting social cohesion and peace

building within the settlement. However, some respondents expressed hesitation noting that not everyone agrees to Islamic methods, especially when conflicts are related to resources or politics. Some prefer more formal or government interventions. The Qur'an affirms the value of peaceful settlement, as in *Surah Al-Hujurat (49:10)*:

> *"The believers are but brothers, so make peace between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy."*

Surah Al-Anfal (8:61) commands:

> *"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it (also) and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing."*

The quotes and verses form the theological backbone of Islamic conflict resolution emphasizing the spiritual reward of making peace and divine responsibility of Muslim leaders and believers to seek reconciliation over revenge. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself served as a model mediator throughout his life. For example in the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, where the Prophet prioritized long-term peace and stability over immediate victory, teaching Muslims the value of wisdom, restraint and negotiation. He also stated in a hadith:

> *"Shall I not tell you what is better than the rank of fasting, prayer, and charity? It is making peace between people."*
>
> *(Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 43, Hadith 4904)*

The Mufti of Uganda, Sheikh Shaban Ramadhan Mubaje emphasizes the role of religious leaders in promoting peaceful co-existence. In a 2021 interfaith dialogue in Hoima, he declared:

> *"Conflict among believers is an opportunity for dialogue, not division. We have to reconcile and forgive; this is our obligation, not our choice."*

4.2.7: The practice of Sulh helps reduce hatred and restore mutual respect in community

Respondents were asked whether the practice of Sulh helps reduce hatred and restore mutual respect in the community, their responses were as presented in table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: Practice of Sulh helps reduce hatred and restore mutual respect in community

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	16	10.7	10.7	10.7
Disagree	22	14.7	14.7	25.3
Neutral	15	10.0	10.0	35.3
Agree	52	34.7	34.7	70.0
Strongly Agree	45	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Sulh is not only about ending conflict but about healing relationships. A peace that is imposed without reconciliation is not lasting. Result of findings in table 4.13 above indicates that the majority 97(64.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that the practice of Sulh helps reduce hatred and restore mutual respect in the community. However, 15(10%) were not sure and 38(25.3%) of the respondents of the respondents were in disagreement. This implies that majority of refugees in Kyangwali Settlement value Sulh is an effective tool for repairing broken relationships and easing community tensions. Sulh is rooted in dialogue, mutual understanding and forgiveness and seen by many as culturally appropriate and spiritually fulfilling than formal legal mechanisms. It allows communities to resolve disputes without resorting to violence or long-lasting grudges. However, some refugees in disagreement revealed that the practice of Sulh is not always effective especially when power dynamics within the community are not addressed. According to classical jurists such as Imam Al-Nawawi and Ibn Qudamah, Sulh is considered a legally binding and preferred method of dispute resolution in Shari'ah. In Al-Mughni, Ibn Qudamah writes: "Sulh is recommended because it stops enmity and hatred and brings about

love and harmony." A 2018 study by the Islamic Relief Worldwide found that in refugee camps in Sudan and Lebanon, Sulh was more effective than formal legal systems in resolving land, family and tribal disputes.

4.2.8 Non-violence (Rifq wa Al-Rahma) is emphasized in Islamic conflict resolution

The study asked respondents whether Non-violence (Rifq wa Al-Rahma) is emphasized in Islamic conflict resolution teachings. The results are indicated in the table 4.14:

Table 4.14: Non-violence (Rifq wa Al-Rahma) is emphasized in Islamic conflict resolution

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	40	26.7	33.4
	Not Sure	-	0	33.4
	Agree	50	33.3	66.7
	Strongly Agree	50	33.3	100
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Non-violence (Rifq wa Al-Rahma) is a principle in Islamic conflict resolution, rooted in both the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). From the table above, 50(33.3%) strongly agreed, 50(33.3%) agreed, 10(6.7%) strongly disagree and 40(26.7%) disagreed. Majority of the respondents agreed with the statement and this implies that members of the refugee community in Kyangwali Settlement recognize the value of resolving conflicts through calmness, compassion and restraint as emphasized in Islamic teachings. This means that non-violence is not only accepted but appreciated as a spiritually guided approach to maintaining social harmony. In Kyangwali settlement, the emphasis on *Rifq wa Al-Rahma* provides a moral framework that discourages retaliation and promotes reconciliation. A critical value which informs the Islamic conception of peace is patience (sabr). Patience is the focus of about 200 verses of the Qur'an and is referred to indirectly in many others. It is one of the core subjects of the Scriptures and "is a virtue of believers, who are expected to endure enormous difficulties

and still maintain a strong belief in God" (Abu-Nimer 2003). The Qu'ran urges Muslims to suspend judgment and be patient as the verse states, "And endure patiently whatever may befall thee. (Q 31:17). God asks believers to be steadfast and promises deliverance to those who endure these difficulties with patience: "*And we made a people, considered weak (and of no account), inheritors of lands in both the east and the west, - lands whereon we sent down our blessings. The fair promise of thy Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel, because they had patience and constancy, and We levelled to the ground the great works and fine buildings which Pharaoh and his people erected (with such pride)"* (Q7:137). In another verse the Qur'an has all the Prophets speak: "And we shall surely bear with patience all the harm you do us" (Q14:12-13).

Yet, the Qur'an does not ask Muslims to remain passive in the face of oppression and injustice. On the contrary, it asks Muslims to engage in active struggle (jihad) to establish peace and harmony. However, Muslims must not transgress in their struggle and must also be patient. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said during the Farewell Pilgrimage: The fighter in the way of God is he who makes jihad against himself (jahada nafsah) for the sake of obeying God.

4.3: To examine the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution in kyangwali refugee resettlement

This section presents analysis and interpretation of findings on the second objective of the study which sought to examine the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution in kyangwali refugee resettlement. Statistical tables with frequencies and percentages were used to analyze and interpret findings on the second objective of the study.

4.3.1: The leadership structure among Islamic clerics is clear and well respected in the community

On the statement whether the leadership structure among Islamic clerics is clear and well respected in the refugee community, their responses are presented in table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: Leadership structure among Islamic clerics is well respected in the community

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	14	9.3	9.3	9.3
Disagree	15	10.0	10.0	19.3
Neutral	12	8.0	8.0	27.3
Agree	48	32.0	32.0	59.3
Strongly Agree	61	40.7	40.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Leadership is a necessity, because the corresponding reality that happened, people who are members of an association in both the small and large scale will require a leader figure. Without their leader, the structure and rules of an association tough formulated and implemented. As a result, the purpose of the assembly will not be realized properly. While humans are social creatures that one would require groups to be able to accommodate their social needs. Table 4.15 above presents that the majority 109(72.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that the leadership structure among Islamic clerics is clear and well respected in the refugee community. This implies that refugees in Kyangwali recognize a defined and authoritative hierarchy among Islamic leaders, which enhances their legitimacy and effectiveness in guiding religious and social affairs, including conflict resolution. This clarity in leadership structure contributes to community trust and cohesion as refugees are likely to follow guidance from leaders they perceive as spiritually grounded, organized and accountable. Such trust reflects traditional Islamic governance structures where Imams and Sheikhs operate under recognized bodies or councils guided by senior clerics or the Mufti's office. Leadership is understood from the content

of the Hadith of the Prophet when answering questions Huzaifah bin al-Yaman: You let the assembly along with Islam and their leaders. I (Huzaifah) ask again: What if only when the Muslims do not have Juma'ah also no leader? He replied: You let separating themselves from their collection even if you are forced to eat the roots of timber and stay with you there so that you die in such circumstances (Bukhari, hadith number 1095)

4.3.2: Islamic leaders encourage collective decision-making when resolving conflicts

Respondents were asked whether Islamic religious leaders encourage consultation and collective decision-making when resolving conflicts, their responses were summarized in table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16: Islamic leaders encourage collective decision-making when resolving conflicts

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	23	15.3	15.3	15.3
Agree	87	58.0	58.0	73.3
Strongly Agree	40	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to findings in table 4.16 above, the majority 127(84.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that Islamic leaders encourage collective decision-making when resolving conflicts. 23(15.3%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This implies that Islamic conflict resolution in Kyangwali Settlement is not viewed as an authoritarian or top-down process but rather as one that involves community participation, consultation (Shura) and shared responsibility. Islamic leaders are not perceived as unilateral decision-makers, but rather as facilitators who promote inclusive dialogue and shared solutions. In Islam, Shura is not merely a leadership option; it is a foundational principle that ensures decisions reflect collective wisdom and fairness. Islamic leaders in Kyangwali demonstrate an approach that empowers individuals and reinforces social unity. Such participatory processes are important in refugee settings where

conflict arises from strained resources, cultural diversity and trauma. Through collective decision-making, trust is cultivated, and resolutions are more likely to be accepted and sustained. According to Mohiuddin and Muzahidul (2016), Islamic leaders' decision making is more towards the Shura (consultation) based. It may take time rather than the command or autocratic style of decision making but this time recovered in the later phases when most of the implementation participant already part of the consultation.

4.3.3: Community elders and influencers play an effective role in conflict mediation

When respondents were asked whether community elders and influencers play an effective role in conflict mediation and their responses were as presented in table 4.17 below;

Table 4.17: Community elders and influencers play an effective role in conflict mediation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Neutral	25	16.7	16.7	16.7
Agree	76	50.7	50.7	67.3
Strongly Agree	49	32.7	32.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Findings in table 4.17 above present that 125(83.4%) of the respondents were in agreement that community elders and influencers play an effective role in conflict mediation. This implies that traditional authority figures such as respected elders, cultural leaders and long-established community influencers continue to hold a trusted position in the mediation of disputes within Kyangwali Refugee Settlement. Their involvement reflects a deep-rooted cultural reliance on wisdom, experience and social standing in resolving interpersonal and communal tensions. In many African and Islamic societies, elders are viewed not only as custodians of moral values but also as neutral figures whose life experience equips them to guide disputing parties toward reconciliation. During interviews, One South Sudanese father explained:

"Our elders know the history behind our conflicts, they listen to both sides and help us calm down before things get worse."

Refugees emphasized that elders tend to handle conflicts with a tone of familiarity and compassion especially when disputes are emotionally charged. Unlike formal legal procedures, which may seem distant or intimidating, elder-led mediation is perceived as a culturally safe and accessible space where individuals can express grievances without fear of shame or punishment. This form of justice is important in refugee settings where trauma, loss of identity and fractured trust can make individuals wary of formal systems

4.3.4: Conflict resolutions led by Islamic leaders are accepted and respected by the parties

Respondents were asked whether conflict resolutions led by Islamic leaders are generally accepted and respected by the parties involved, their responses are presented in table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18: Conflict resolutions led by Islamic leaders are respected by the parties

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	17	11.3	11.3	11.3
Disagree	36	24.0	24.0	35.3
Neutral	11	7.3	7.3	42.7
Agree	40	26.7	26.7	69.3
Strongly Agree	46	30.7	30.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to findings in table 4.18 above reveals that the majority 86(57.4%) of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that conflict resolutions led by Islamic leaders are generally accepted and respected by the parties involved. However, 11(7.3%) were not sure and 53(35.3%) of the respondents were in disagreement with this statement. This implies that the effectiveness of Islamic-led conflict resolution in Kyangwali Settlement is largely tied to the perceived moral integrity, impartiality and spiritual authority of the religious leaders involved. Where leaders are seen as fair, accessible and grounded in Qur'anic principles, their decisions

tend to carry communal respect and compliance. However, some refugees voiced concerns about bias especially when religious leaders belong to specific ethnic or linguistic groups. Others felt that religious leaders sometimes focus on spiritual reconciliation than on addressing practical injustices, such as property loss or gender-based grievances. The findings confirm with Islamic principles in Surah An-Nisa (4:135) which urges believers to uphold justice impartially: "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves or your parents or your kin..." according to Abu-Nimer (2003), legitimacy of Islamic conflict resolution depends on spiritual authority and the community's perception of fairness and the ability of leaders to balance moral guidance with practical justice. During an interview, a respondent shared:

> *"When the sheikh spoke from the Qur'an, we knew it was serious. We had to respect the decision, not just because of him, but because of God."* Such sentiments demonstrate that decisions made through Islamic frameworks carry spiritual weight which reinforces compliance.

4.3.5: Islamic leaders work with humanitarian actors to address conflict issues

Respondents were asked whether Islamic leaders work with humanitarian or government actors to address conflict issues in the settlement and their responses were as presented in table 4.19 below.

Table 4.19: Islamic leaders work with humanitarian actors to address conflict issues

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Neutral	37	24.7	24.7	24.7
Agree	77	51.3	51.3	76.0
Strongly Agree	36	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Research findings in table 4.19 above present that the majority 113(75.3%) of the respondents generally agreed that Islamic leaders work with humanitarian or government actors to address conflict issues in the settlement. Though 37(24.7%) of the respondents were not sure. This implies that Islamic leaders in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement are not operating in isolation but are increasingly recognized as active collaborators in multi-stakeholder efforts to promote peace and resolve disputes. Their involvement with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and international humanitarian bodies like UNHCR enhances both their credibility and their capacity to mediate community disputes in a more structured, inclusive, and informed manner. Unlike traditional, isolated forms of mediation, these joint efforts allow religious leaders to address not only spiritual or moral dimensions of conflict but also the socio-economic and legal issues underlying many disputes in the refugee context. Such collaboration reflects the Qur'anic principle of ta'awun as stated in Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:2):

> *"And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression."*

A Sudanese refugee woman during an interview noted: *When there is tension in the block, it's the sheikh and the Red Cross team who come together to calm things down."* Likewise, another officer in Kikuube District confirmed: *"We rely on religious leaders to help interpret government guidance to communities in a way that is accepted and respected.*

4.3.6: Islamic leadership structures help bridge gaps between ethnic or national groups

When respondents were asked whether Islamic leadership structures in Kyangwali help bridge gaps between ethnic or national groups, their responses were as presented in table 4.20 below.

Table 4.20: Islamic leadership structures help bridge gaps between national groups

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	14	9.3	9.3	9.3
Disagree	13	8.7	8.7	18.0
Neutral	27	18.0	18.0	36.0
Agree	39	26.0	26.0	62.0
Strongly Agree	57	38.0	38.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Result of findings in table 4.20 indicate that 96(64%) of the respondents were in agreement that Islamic leadership structures in Kyangwali help bridge gaps between ethnic or national groups. However, 27(18%) were not sure and 27(18%) of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement. This implies that Islamic leadership in the settlement plays a role in fostering unity and peaceful coexistence among the diverse refugee populations which include South Sudanese, Congolese, Somali, Sudanese and Rwandan nationals among others. Friday sermons, community dialogues, and Qur'an-based teachings emphasize unity (wahda), brotherhood (ukhuwa), and the importance of peaceful coexistence regardless of one's tribal origin. Islam emphasizes the concept of *Ummah,* a universal brotherhood that transcends ethnic, national, and racial boundaries. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) declared in his Farewell Sermon: *"All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have superiority over an Arab..."* (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 1623). This principle of equality is also reflected in the Qur'an, which states: *"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you"* (*Qur'an 49:13*). By modeling their leadership on these teachings, Islamic leaders in Kyangwali help dismantle ethnic divisions and promote peaceful coexistence among diverse refugee groups. Their emphasis on shared faith and collective identity serves as spiritual and social glue, reinforcing the Qur'anic ideal that diversity is not a source of conflict but a basis for mutual understanding and cooperation (*Qur'an 30:22*).

During an interview, one youth stated: *"In the mosque, we forget who is from where. We are Muslims first. The sheikh always reminds us that tribalism is not from Islam."*

4.3.7 Qadis ensure that conflict resolutions follow Islamic legal principles (Sharia)

When respondents were asked whether Qadis ensure that conflict resolutions follow Islamic legal principles (Sharia), their responses were as presented in table 4.21 below.

Table 4.21: Qadis ensure that conflict resolutions follow Islamic legal principles (Sharia)

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	10.0	10.0
	Disagree	20	13.3	23.3
	Not Sure	10	6.7	30.0
	Agree	95	63.3	93.3
	Strongly Agree	10	6.7	100
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Data, 2025

From the table above, 15(10%) strongly disagreed, 20(13.3%) disagreed, 10(6.7%) were not sure, 95(63.3%) agreed and 10(6.7%) strongly agreed that Qadis ensure that conflict resolutions follow Islamic legal principles (Sharia). This implies that community members trust that Islamic judges (Qadis) adhere to Sharia when resolving disputes, reinforcing the legitimacy and religious grounding of conflict resolution processes. However, some respondents revealed concerns about inconsistencies in the application of Sharia, biases and training among some Qadis. The trust placed in Qadis to apply Sharia in conflict resolution reflects the fundamental Islamic principle of justice (*adl*) which is central to governance and dispute settlement. The Qur'an commands: *"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives"* (*Qur'an 4:135*). Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) further mandates that Qadis must possess deep knowledge of Sharia and maintain ethical integrity to ensure fair judgments (Imam Al-Ghazali) highlighted the judge's role as a guardian of justice and social order. The concerns expressed by some respondents about inconsistencies

and biases indicate the critical need for continuous training and adherence to established legal frameworks, ensuring that Qadis uphold these sacred responsibilities effectively. An interview with a key informant, revealed that:

> *"While most Qadis strive to apply Sharia correctly, challenges remain due to limited access to continuous religious and legal education. Sometimes, local customs influence decisions more than strict Islamic law which can cause disagreements among community members."*

4.3.8 Religious councils bring together community leaders to find fair solutions to disputes

When respondents were asked whether religious councils bring together community leaders to find inclusive and fair solutions to disputes, their responses were as presented in table 4.22 below.

Table 4.23: Religious councils bring together community leaders to find fair solutions

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	10	6.7	13.4
	Not Sure	20	13.3	26.7
	Agree	60	40	66.7
	Strongly Agree	50	33.3	100
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Data, 2025

From the table above, 50(33.3%) strongly agreed, 60(40%) agreed with the statement that religious councils bring together community leaders to find inclusive and fair solutions to disputes, 20(13.3%) were not sure, 10(6.7%) disagreed and 10(6.7%) strongly disagreed. This implies that the majority responses reflect strong community recognition of religious councils as essential platforms for promoting inclusive dialogue and shared responsibility in conflict resolution. Bringing together religious leaders, elders, women representatives and local officials, these councils embody the Islamic principle of Shura (consultation) which promotes collective

participation and fairness. The Qur'an explicitly commands believers to consult one another in their affairs: *"And consult them in affairs. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]"* (*Qur'an 3:159*). In Kyangwali Refugee Settlement where multiple ethnicities and backgrounds coexist, religious councils serve as critical institutions embodying *Shura*, bringing together imams, elders, women and local leaders to mediate disputes. The Prophet Muhammad himself practiced *Shura* with his companions, emphasizing that inclusive decision-making strengthens community bonds and ensures that leadership remains accountable and just (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1829). Therefore, these councils reflect a living tradition of Islamic conflict resolution that promotes fairness, mutual respect and unity, values essential for peaceful coexistence in refugee settings.

Table 4.4: To analyze community trust in Islamic Religious Leaders as mediators in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

This section present analysis and interpretation of findings on third objective of the study which sought to analyze community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution in kyangwali refugee resettlement. Tables with frequencies and percentages were used to analyze data.

4.4.1: Community respects the guidance of Islamic religious leaders in conflict resolution

Respondents were asked whether community respects the guidance of Islamic religious leaders in conflict resolution, their responses were as indicated in table 4.24 below.

Table 4.24: Community respects the guidance of Islamic religious leaders in resolution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	15	10.0	10.0	10.0
Disagree	14	9.3	9.3	19.3
Neutral	12	8.0	8.0	27.3
Agree	81	54.0	54.0	81.3
Strongly Agree	28	18.7	18.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Findings in table 4.24 above presents that 109(72.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that community respects the guidance of Islamic religious leaders in conflict resolution. This implies that Islamic religious leaders hold moral authority and are trusted as key figures in mediating disputes, promoting peace and guiding communal harmony in the refugee settlement. Their respected status enhances their ability to influence reconciliation processes and uphold social cohesion in line with Islamic principles of justice and compassion. However, 12(8%) were neutral and 29(19.3%) were in disagreement. This means that adherence to religious guidance affects the uniform acceptance of Islamic leaders' mediation efforts. The majority respect accorded to Islamic religious leaders in conflict resolution reflects the Qur'anic injunction that emphasizes the importance of obeying those entrusted with authority and wisdom. Allah commands: *"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you"* (*Qur'an 4:59*), highlighting the spiritual and social responsibility of religious leaders in guiding the community. Imam Al-Ghazali has underscored the role of the *'Ulama* (Islamic scholars) and leaders as custodians of justice (*'adl*) and moral exemplars who reconcile disputes based on divine law (*Sharia*). Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, *"The example of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body: when any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever"* (Sahih Muslim), emphasizing unity and mutual respect that should exist under righteous

leadership. However, the dissent and neutrality among some members indicate a need for greater adherence to the Prophet's guidance on consultation (*Shura*) and justice, as the Qur'an states, *"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice"* (*Qur'an 4:58*).

4.4.2: Islamic leaders in the settlement are seen as neutral parties during conflict mediation

Respondents were asked whether Islamic leaders in the settlement are seen as neutral parties during conflict mediation, their responses were as presented in table 4.25 below.

Table 4.25: Islamic leaders in the settlement are seen as neutral parties during conflict

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	33	22.0	22.0	22.0
Disagree	19	12.7	12.7	34.7
Neutral	8	5.3	5.3	40.0
Agree	35	23.3	23.3	63.3
Strongly Agree	55	36.7	36.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to findings in table 4.25 above, the majority 90(60%) of the respondents were in agreement that Islamic leaders in the settlement are seen as neutral parties during conflict mediation. This implies that these leaders generally enjoy a level of trust grounded in their reputation for impartiality, which is crucial for effective conflict resolution in line with Islamic principles of justice (*adl*) and fairness. The Qur'an commands: *"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives"* (*Qur'an 4:135*), Islamic teachings hold neutrality as a sacred duty, and the Prophet Muhammad emphasized that a just judge is like a guardian who must neither favor nor discriminate. However, 8(5.3%) were neutral and 52(34.7%) of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement. This indicates that some respondents question the neutrality of

some leaders, suggesting possible perceptions of bias or favoritism which undermine community trust and the legitimacy of mediation efforts. Findings conform to the Islamic jurisprudential tradition and Qur'anic guidance, justice, impartiality and community-centered conflict resolution. The principle of neutrality upheld by Islamic leaders resonates with the Qur'anic verse: *"Indeed, Allah commands you to be just and do good..."* (*Qur'an 16:90*), which forms the ethical foundation of Islamic mediation. Furthermore, Imam Al-Mawardi in his work *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya* emphasized that religious leaders and judges (*Qadis*) must avoid bias and uphold fairness to maintain public trust.

4.4.3: Community members seek advice of Islamic religious leaders before taking action

Respondents were asked whether community members seek advice of Islamic religious leaders before taking action in conflict situations and their responses were as indicated in table 4.26 below.

Table 4.26: Community members seek advice of Islamic leaders before taking action

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	19	12.7	12.7	12.7
Disagree	21	14.0	14.0	26.7
Agree	57	38.0	38.0	64.7
Strongly Agree	53	35.3	35.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Findings in table 4.26 above indicates that the majority 110(73.3%) of the respondents agreed that community members seek advice of Islamic religious leaders before taking action in conflict situations. This means that Islamic leaders are widely regarded as trusted sources of moral and spiritual guidance whose counsel is sought to prevent rash decisions and promote peace in accordance with Islamic principles. This behavior reflects the Qur'anic call to seek knowledge and wisdom in difficult moments: *"Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know"* (*Qur'an 16:43*). It also aligns with the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was

consulted by companions in personal and communal disputes which shaped the Islamic model of leadership based on consultation (*Shura*) and preventative wisdom. However, 40(26.7%) of the respondents disagreed. This implies that minority prefers alternative sources of counsel such as secular authorities, tribal elders, or humanitarian officers. During interviews;

One Somali woman shared, *"Whenever my family has misunderstandings with neighbors, we go to the sheikh first. He helps us think calmly and reminds us of what Allah says about patience and forgiveness."* Such reliance is rooted in Islamic teaching, where believers are encouraged to consult the knowledgeable and righteous before acting: *"Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know"* (*Qur'an 16:43*).

Another elder explained;

> *"Our Sheikh uses examples from the Prophet's life to remind us how disputes were handled without violence. He once told two young men to follow the Prophet's example in the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, choosing peace even when you have the power to fight."* These narratives reflect the Prophet Muhammad's tradition of being a mediator and advisor, promoting calm deliberation over impulsive reaction (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 2697).

However, not all respondents shared the same confidence. A youth leader noted;

> *"Some young people don't always go to religious leaders. They say the sheikhs are too slow or don't understand the real issues we face, especially when it's about land, business or relationships."*

4.4.4: Islamic leaders are willing to listen when community members face disputes

Respondents were asked whether Islamic religious leaders are accessible and willing to listen when community members face disputes and their responses were as summarized in table 4.27 below.

Table 4.27: Islamic leaders are willing to listen when community members face disputes

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	37	24.7	24.7	24.7
Disagree	27	18.0	18.0	42.7
Neutral	21	14.0	14.0	56.7
Agree	38	25.3	25.3	82.0
Strongly Agree	27	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to findings in table 4.27 above, the majority 65(43.3%) of the respondents were in agreement that Islamic religious leaders are accessible and willing to listen when community members face disputes. This suggests that refugees in Kyangwali view religious leaders as approachable figures who offer timely spiritual and moral support during times of conflict. During a field interview, a South Sudanese mother of five shared: *"When my sons fought over a water container, I didn't go to the police. I walked to the mosque, and the sheikh sat them down and reminded them of the Prophet's teachings on brotherhood. He didn't rush. He listened."* The Qur'an emphasizes this model of leadership: *"And lower your wing to the believers who follow you"* (*Qur'an 26:215*), encouraging humility and attentiveness in those in positions of guidance. However, 21(14%) were neutral and 64(42.7%) of the respondents were in disagreement, an indication that many community members perceive gaps in the accessibility or responsiveness of religious leaders. A Congolese youth respondent explained: *"Some of the imams are always busy or only talk to elders. When we try to bring our problems, they say come another day, or they don't follow up."* This reveals that although Islamic leaders are respected, structural barriers such

as leadership overload, generational disconnects or lack of communication channels may be hindering their outreach, especially to marginalized groups like the youth or single women. In Kyangwali settlement, effective Islamic leadership requires not only scriptural knowledge but also cultural sensitivity and active community engagement. To uphold their role as trusted mediators, these leaders must model the prophetic values of listening (*al-'insāt*) and presence (*hudur*), ensuring every voice, regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity is heard and valued.

4.4.5: The community believes Islamic leaders keep conflict discussions confidential

Respondents were asked whether the community believes Islamic leaders keep conflict discussions confidential and their responses were as indicated in table 4.28 below.

Table 4.28: The community believes Islamic leaders keep conflict discussions confidential

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	18	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Disagree	22	14.7	14.7	26.7
	Neutral	18	12.0	12.0	38.7
	Agree	50	33.3	33.3	72.0
	Strongly Agree	42	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Findings in table 4.28 above presents that 92(61.3%) of the respondents were in agreement that the community believes Islamic leaders keep conflict discussions confidential. However, 18(12%) were not sure and 40(26.7%) of the respondents were in disagreement. The findings indicate that community members in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement hold a strong belief that Islamic religious leaders handle conflict-related discussions with confidentiality. This trust in discretion plays an important role in encouraging individuals and families to approach sheikhs and imams with sensitive matters, knowing that their concerns will not be publicly exposed or misused. During field interviews, a mother recounted how she confided in a local imam about a dispute over child custody. She noted, *"He didn't speak to anyone else about it, just helped us*

reach an agreement. That gave me confidence to trust religious leaders again." This demonstrates the value of confidentiality in fostering safe and respectful environments for dialogue and resolution. Islamic teachings strongly reinforce this ethical standard. The Prophet Muhammad said, *"If a person confides in you, you must not disclose it"* (Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith 4868), establishing confidentiality as a sacred trust. In Kyangwali, the assurance that religious leaders will safeguard private conversations helps maintain peace and social cohesion. However, some respondents expressed concern that not all leaders consistently uphold this value when disputes involve community powerful families.

4.4.6: Islamic religious leaders lead by example, which increases people's trust in them

On the question whether Islamic religious leaders lead by example, which increases people's trust in them as conflict mediators their responses were as presented in table 4.29 below.

Table 4.29: Islamic religious leaders lead by example, which increases people's trust

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	24	16.0	16.0	16.0
Disagree	12	8.0	8.0	24.0
Agree	99	66.0	66.0	90.0
Strongly Agree	15	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 4.29 above indicates that 114(76%) of the respondents were in agreement that Islamic religious leaders lead by example, which increases people's trust in them as conflict mediators. The findings imply that many members of the Kyangwali Refugee Settlement place a high level of trust in Islamic religious leaders because they are seen as individuals who lead by example. Their conduct, both in public and private, reflects the moral and ethical teachings of Islam, which strengthens their legitimacy as neutral mediators in times of conflict. However, some respondents expressed concern that a few religious leaders fall short of these standards,

especially when involved in ethnic or political alliances. While exemplary conduct increases trust in religious leadership, any deviation from Islamic ethical behavior risks weakening their role as effective mediators. Therefore, the continued credibility of Islamic conflict resolution in Kyangwali depends on leaders not only teaching Qur'anic values but living by them in daily community interactions. During field interviews, an elder remarked, *"Our Imam doesn't just preach unity—he lives it. He listens even to people outside his tribe, and that makes us trust him when disputes arise."* This aligns with the Qur'anic command: *"O you who believe! Why do you say what you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah that you say what you do not do"* (Surah As-Saff 61:2–3), which calls on leaders to match words with action.

The findings are in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of leaders embodying the values they preach to maintain moral authority and community trust. The Qur'an instructs believers and leaders alike to act consistently with their words, as highlighted in Surah As-Saff (61:2–3): *"O you who believe! Why do you say what you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah that you say what you do not do."* Furthermore, the prophetic tradition underscores the significance of exemplary conduct. Imam Al-Ghazali have also emphasized that true leadership in Islam demands aligning one's actions with Islamic ethics to sustain social harmony and justice.

4.4.7 Islamic leaders are committed to ensuring peace and justice for everyone

The study asked respondents whether Islamic leaders are committed to ensuring peace and justice for everyone in the community and the results are indicated in the table 4.30 below:

Table 4.30: Islamic leaders are committed to ensuring peace and justice for everyone

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	10	6.7	13.4
	Not Sure	20	13.3	26.7
	Agree	60	40	76.7
	Strongly Agree	50	33.3	100
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Data, 2025

From the table above, 50(33.3%) strongly agreed, 60(40%) agreed, 20(13.3%) were not sure, 10(6.7%) disagreed and 10(6.7%) strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents agreed that Islamic leaders are committed to ensuring peace and justice for everyone in the community. This implies that Islamic leaders are committed to ensuring peace and justice within the community. Their commitment is seen not only in their religious teachings but also in their active engagement in resolving disputes fairly and advocating for the rights of all parties involved. Refugees recount how imams and sheikhs intervene impartially in conflicts, regardless of ethnic or social background, emphasizing justice as a key Islamic principle. For example, during interviews, a respondent noted, "Our religious leaders treat everyone equally, whether you are from the majority tribe or a minority group. They remind us that justice is from Allah and must be upheld." This approach resonates deeply with the Qur'anic injunction: *"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice"* (Surah An-Nisa 4:58). Such leadership promotes trust and encourages peaceful coexistence among refugee population. However, the presence of some who expressed disagreement signals the ongoing need for leaders to consistently demonstrate this commitment visibly and transparently to strengthen communal trust further. During the interview, a respected local imam shared his reflections on the responsibilities of Islamic leaders in maintaining justice and peace within the refugee settlement. He stated,

"Our duty as religious leaders is to reflect the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). We do not judge people based on where they come from or what language they speak. When two people have a disagreement, I always begin by listening to both sides without interruption. We consult the Qur'an and Hadith, and we remind them that Allah loves justice. Sometimes people come to me angry and leave hugging each other." He added that many refugees, particularly women and youth, approach him because they feel Islamic leaders offer a moral space that prioritizes fairness over politics.

A women's representative also spoke passionately about the role Islamic leaders play in conflict resolution. She explained,

"In our community, people respect the sheikhs because they speak the truth, even when it is difficult. I once witnessed a case where a powerful man tried to take land from a widow. The sheikh stood up in front of everyone and said that in Islam, the rights of the weak must be protected. He quoted the Qur'an and helped the woman get justice. That day, many of us felt proud of our faith." She also noted that the presence of Islamic leaders in community meetings alongside elders and humanitarian workers has brought a sense of shared responsibility and transparency.

4.4.8 Leaders work to unite the community rather than divide it during times of conflict

The study asked respondents whether Islamic leaders work to unite the community rather than divide it during times of conflict. The results are indicated in the table 4.31 below:

Table 4.31: Leaders work to unite the community rather than divide it during conflict

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	-	-	-
	Disagree	20	13.3	13.3
	Not Sure	20	13.3	26.7
	Agree	20	13.3	40
	Strongly agree	90	60	100
	Total	**150**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Data, 2025

From the table above, 90(60%) strongly agreed, 20(13.3%) agreed, 20(13.3%) disagreed and 20(13.3%) were not sure. Majority of the respondents agreed that Islamic leaders work to unite the community rather than divide it during times of conflict. The findings imply that Islamic religious leaders in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement are widely recognized as unifying figures during times of conflict. Their role in promoting unity is grounded in both religious responsibility and practical community engagement. Through Friday sermons (*khutbahs*), inter-tribal dialogue forums, and involvement in local dispute mediations, these leaders consistently preach messages of harmony, mutual respect, and shared identity under Islam. A Somali elder in the settlement remarked during interviews, *"When there's tension between tribes, our sheikhs remind us that we are all one Ummah, one Muslim family. They calm our anger and help us see each other as brothers and sisters."* This approach reflects the Qur'anic injunction: *"The believers are but a single brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers"* (Surah Al-Hujurat 49:10). By framing conflicts in the context of shared faith and collective responsibility, Islamic leaders help dissolve ethnic divisions and prevent escalation. Their actions not only draw from divine guidance but also resonate deeply with the lived experiences of refugees seeking safety, dignity, and community. During the interview, a respected elderly man remarked,

> *"There was a time when two tribes in the settlement nearly fought over water access. Emotions were high, and people were ready to clash. But before things got worse, the*

sheikh gathered elders from both groups and reminded us of the Qur'anic teaching that says 'Hold fast to the rope of Allah, all of you together, and do not be divided' (Surah Aali 'Imran 3:103). He told us that we are all Muslims and refugees our strength comes from unity, not division."

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0: Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations derived and drawn from the findings, analysis and interpretation of the study.

5.1: Summary of Findings

The study focused on assessing Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda with focus on Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement, a descriptive study design was used and both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. The findings from the study were as follows:

5.1.1: Findings on the use of Islamic doctrinal teachings in conflict resolution among refugees in Kyangwali Settlement

The following is the summary of findings on first objective of the study;

According to result of findings, 150(100%) respondents agreed that Islamic teachings emphasize peace and reconciliation among conflicting parties. Members of the community turn to religious teachings as a first step when conflicts arise and that these teachings shape how people perceive justice, forgiveness, and social responsibility. Islamic teachings strongly emphasize forgiveness as a higher moral ground than revenge in resolving conflicts. The Qur'an encourages believers to pardon others, stating that forgiveness leads to greater spiritual reward (Qur'an 42:40).

Field findings revealed that 79(52.6%) of the respondents agreed that the Qur'an provides relevant guidance on resolving disputes peacefully. However, 26(17.3%) were neutral on the statement and 45(30%) were in disagreement. Some community members perceive religious teachings disconnected from the realities of the disputes they encounter like those involving

resources, domestic tensions or ethnic divisions. Nonetheless, among those who agreed, many pointed to specific verses such as: “And if two parties of the believers fight then make peace between them... Indeed, the believers are brothers. So make peace between your brothers” (Qur’an 49:9–10). This verse was cited by sheikhs and religious leaders in interviews as the foundational Islamic mandate for reconciliation.

According to findings, 113(75.3%) of the respondents generally agreed that forgiving others, especially when one has power, is encouraged in Islam to improve relationships. However, 37(29.3%) of the respondents were in disagreement. While community members recognize forgiveness as an essential virtue in Islam for those in positions of authority, some respondents are unconvinced about its application in real-life situations. For Islamic teachings on forgiveness to have a transformative impact, they must be modeled by leaders and community influencers. When those in power demonstrate humility and the willingness to forgive, it reinforces the credibility of Islamic conflict resolution practices. However, if forgiveness is preached but rarely practiced by leaders, this can weaken community trust and limit the spiritual and social effectiveness of Islamic guidance in managing disputes. The findings are in line with Qur’anic teachings that emphasize the moral superiority of forgiveness by those in authority.

Field findings show that 94(62.7%) agreed that Islamic leaders serve as mediators in resolving interpersonal or community conflicts. However, 7(4.7%) were neutral and 49 (32.7%) disagreed with this statement. Although Islamic leaders are widely respected as moral and spiritual authorities, their effectiveness as mediators may depend on how present, impartial and approachable they are within community. This means that for Islamic religious leadership to have a meaningful impact on conflict resolution in Kyangwali settlement, leaders must go beyond symbolic roles and engage with the community.

Result of findings indicates that the majority 97(64.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that the practice of Sulh helps reduce hatred and restore mutual respect in the community. However, 15(10%) were not sure and 38(25.3%) of the respondents of the respondents were in disagreement. This implies that majority of refugees in Kyangwali Settlement value Sulh is an effective tool for repairing broken relationships and easing community tensions. Sulh is rooted in dialogue, mutual understanding and forgiveness and seen by many as culturally appropriate and spiritually fulfilling than formal legal mechanisms. It allows communities to resolve disputes without resorting to violence or long-lasting grudges. However, some refugees in disagreement revealed that the practice of Sulh is not always effective especially when power dynamics within the community are not addressed. According to classical jurists such as Imam Al-Nawawi and Ibn Qudamah, Sulh is considered a legally binding and preferred method of dispute resolution in Shari'ah. In Al-Mughni, Ibn Qudamah writes: "Sulh is recommended because it stops enmity and hatred and brings about love and harmony.

5.1.2: Findings on the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

The following is the summary of findings on second objective of the study;

Field findings presents that the majority 109(72.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that the leadership structure among Islamic clerics is clear and well respected in the refugee community. Refugees in Kyangwali recognize a defined and authoritative hierarchy among Islamic leaders, which enhances their legitimacy and effectiveness in guiding religious and social affairs, including conflict resolution. This clarity in leadership structure contributes to community trust and cohesion as refugees are likely to follow guidance from leaders they perceive as spiritually grounded, organized and accountable. Such trust reflects traditional

Islamic governance structures where Imams and Sheikhs operate under recognized bodies or councils guided by senior clerics or the Mufti's office. Leadership is understood from the content of the Hadith of the Prophet when answering questions Huzaifah bin al-Yaman: You let the assembly along with Islam and their leaders. I (Huzaifah) ask again: What if only when the Muslims do not have Juma'ah also no leader? He replied: You let separating themselves from their collection even if you are forced to eat the roots of timber and stay with you there so that you die in such circumstances (Bukhari, hadith number 1095)

According to field results, the majority 127(84.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that Islamic leaders encourage collective decision-making when resolving conflicts. 23(15.3%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Islamic conflict resolution in Kyangwali Settlement is not viewed as an authoritarian or top-down process but rather as one that involves community participation, consultation (Shura) and shared responsibility. Islamic leaders are not perceived as unilateral decision-makers, but rather as facilitators who promote inclusive dialogue and shared solutions. In Islam, Shura is not merely a leadership option; it is a foundational principle that ensures decisions reflect collective wisdom and fairness. Islamic leaders in Kyangwali demonstrate an approach that empowers individuals and reinforces social unity. Such participatory processes are important in refugee settings where conflict arises from strained resources, cultural diversity and trauma. Through collective decision-making, trust is cultivated, and resolutions are more likely to be accepted and sustained.

According to Mohiuddin and Muzahidul (2016), Islamic leaders' decision making is more towards the Shura (consultation) based. It may take time rather than the command or autocratic style of decision making but this time recovered in the later phases when most of the implementation participant already part of the consultation.

Field results reveals that the majority 86(57.4%) of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that conflict resolutions led by Islamic leaders are generally accepted and respected by the parties involved. However, 11(7.3%) were not sure and 53(35.3%) of the respondents were in disagreement with this statement. The effectiveness of Islamic-led conflict resolution in Kyangwali Settlement is largely tied to the perceived moral integrity, impartiality and spiritual authority of the religious leaders involved. Where leaders are seen as fair, accessible and grounded in Qur'anic principles, their decisions tend to carry communal respect and compliance. The findings confirm with Islamic principles in Surah An-Nisa (4:135) which urges believers to uphold justice impartially: "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves or your parents or your kin..." according to Abu-Nimer (2003), legitimacy of Islamic conflict resolution depends on spiritual authority and the community's perception of fairness and the ability of leaders to balance moral guidance with practical justice.

Field results revealed that, 50(33.3%) strongly agreed, 60(40%) agreed with the statement that religious councils bring together community leaders to find inclusive and fair solutions to disputes, 20(13.3%) were not sure, 10(6.7%) disagreed and 10(6.7%) strongly disagreed. Bringing together religious leaders, elders, women representatives and local officials, these councils embody the Islamic principle of Shura (consultation) which promotes collective participation and fairness. The Qur'an explicitly commands believers to consult one another in their affairs: *"And consult them in affairs. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]"* (*Qur'an 3:159*). In Kyangwali Refugee Settlement where multiple ethnicities and backgrounds coexist, religious councils serve as critical institutions embodying *Shura*, bringing together imams, elders, women and local leaders

to mediate disputes. The Prophet Muhammad himself practiced *Shura* with his companions, emphasizing that inclusive decision-making strengthens community bonds and ensures that leadership remains accountable and just (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1829). Therefore, these councils reflect a living tradition of Islamic conflict resolution that promotes fairness, mutual respect and unity, values essential for peaceful coexistence in refugee settings.

5.1.3: Findings on the community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

The following is the summary of findings on the third objective of the study;

Field Findings revealed that 109(72.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that community respects the guidance of Islamic religious leaders in conflict resolution. Islamic religious leaders hold moral authority and are trusted as key figures in mediating disputes, promoting peace and guiding communal harmony in the refugee settlement. Their respected status enhances their ability to influence reconciliation processes and uphold social cohesion in line with Islamic principles of justice and compassion. However, 12(8%) were neutral and 29(19.3%) were in disagreement. This means that adherence to religious guidance affects the uniform acceptance of Islamic leaders' mediation efforts. The majority respect accorded to Islamic religious leaders in conflict resolution reflects the Qur'anic injunction that emphasizes the importance of obeying those entrusted with authority and wisdom. Allah commands: *"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you"* (*Qur'an 4:59*), highlighting the spiritual and social responsibility of religious leaders in guiding the community. Imam Al-Ghazali has underscored the role of the *'Ulama* (Islamic scholars) and leaders as custodians of justice (*'adl*) and moral exemplars who reconcile disputes based on divine law (*Sharia*). Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, *"The example of the believers in*

their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body: when any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever" (Sahih Muslim), emphasizing unity and mutual respect that should exist under righteous leadership. However, the dissent and neutrality among some members indicate a need for greater adherence to the Prophet's guidance on consultation (*Shura*) and justice, as the Qur'an states, *"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice"* (*Qur'an 4:58*).

Field Findings indicates that majority 110(73.3%) of the respondents agreed that community members seek advice of Islamic religious leaders before taking action in conflict situations. This means that Islamic leaders are widely regarded as trusted sources of moral and spiritual guidance whose counsel is sought to prevent rash decisions and promote peace in accordance with Islamic principles. This behavior reflects the Qur'anic call to seek knowledge and wisdom in difficult moments: *"Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know"* (*Qur'an 16:43*). It also aligns with the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was consulted by companions in personal and communal disputes which shaped the Islamic model of leadership based on consultation (*Shura*) and preventative wisdom. However, 40(26.7%) of the respondents disagreed. This implies that minority prefers alternative sources of counsel such as secular authorities, tribal elders, or humanitarian officers.

Field findings presents that 92(61.3%) were in agreement that the community believes Islamic leaders keep conflict discussions confidential. However, 18(12%) were not sure and 40(26.7%) of the respondents were in disagreement. The findings indicate that community members in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement hold a strong belief that Islamic religious leaders handle conflict-related discussions with confidentiality. This trust in discretion plays an important role in encouraging individuals and families to approach sheikhs and imams with sensitive matters,

knowing that their concerns will not be publicly exposed or misused. This demonstrates the value of confidentiality in fostering safe and respectful environments for dialogue and resolution. Islamic teachings strongly reinforce this ethical standard. The Prophet Muhammad said, *"If a person confides in you, you must not disclose it"* (Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith 4868), establishing confidentiality as a sacred trust. In Kyangwali, the assurance that religious leaders will safeguard private conversations helps maintain peace and social cohesion.

Field results revealed that, 90(60%) strongly agreed, 20(13.3%) agreed, 20(13.3%) disagreed and 20(13.3%) were not sure. Majority of the respondents agreed that Islamic leaders work to unite the community rather than divide it during times of conflict. The findings imply that Islamic religious leaders in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement are widely recognized as unifying figures during times of conflict. Their role in promoting unity is grounded in both religious responsibility and practical community engagement. Through Friday sermons (*khutbahs*), inter-tribal dialogue forums, and involvement in local dispute mediations, these leaders consistently preach messages of harmony, mutual respect, and shared identity under Islam. This approach reflects the Qur'anic injunction: *"The believers are but a single brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers"* (Surah Al-Hujurat 49:10).

5.2: Conclusions

The study was about assessing Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda with focus on Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement as the case study, the following conclusions were drawn:

5.2.1 The use of Islamic doctrinal teachings in conflict resolution among refugees in Kyangwali Settlement

Based on the study findings, it is concluded that the community widely recognizes and embraces Islamic values such as peace, reconciliation, forgiveness, patience, and non-violence as guiding principles in managing disputes. These teachings are embedded in the moral and spiritual life of the refugees and are often the first point of reference when conflicts arise. The study found that refugees turn to Islamic teachings for guidance on how to handle disagreements, especially those related to resources, domestic challenges or interpersonal tensions. Teachings from the Qur'an and messages delivered during Friday prayers emphasize resolving disputes through patience, dialogue and respect. Forgiveness is especially valued, seen not as a weakness but as a moral ground that promotes healing and restores broken relationships. The concept of Sulh, or amicable settlement, was recognized as an effective and culturally appropriate method for resolving disputes. It promotes reconciliation over confrontation and encourages parties to seek understanding rather than punishment. The role of Islamic leaders in conflict mediation was acknowledged as important but also varied depending on the leaders' presence, impartiality, and approachability. While they are generally respected as moral authorities, their impact is greatest when they actively engage with the community and serve as role models of Islamic values. Thus, Islamic doctrinal teachings serve as a vital tool for peace building and conflict resolution within the Kyangwali refugee settlement.

5.2.2 The influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

Based on the study findings, it is concluded that the clarity and respect accorded to Islamic leadership hierarchies in the settlement enhance both the legitimacy and effectiveness of

religious leaders in mediating disputes. Refugees recognize and trust the structured leadership of Imams, Sheikhs and Qadis which mirrors traditional Islamic governance and provides moral guidance during times of conflict.

The findings further reveal that Islamic leaders in Kyangwali commonly adopt participatory approaches rooted in the principle of *Shura* (consultation), encouraging collective decision-making in conflict resolution. This inclusive leadership style strengthens community ownership of outcomes and fosters lasting peace, especially in a context marked by resource scarcity and cultural diversity. Community elders and influencers also play a complementary role, reflecting the settlement's continued reliance on traditional authority figures who are respected for their wisdom and neutrality. The study shows that while Islamic-led conflict resolutions are generally respected, their effectiveness is shaped by the perceived fairness, spiritual authority and impartiality of the religious leaders involved. Islamic leaders in Kyangwali also collaborate with humanitarian and government actors in addressing conflict-related issues, thereby expanding their reach and effectiveness beyond spiritual mediation. Their involvement with organizations such as the OPM and UNHCR enables them to integrate religious wisdom with socio-legal support mechanisms in handling complex disputes. Furthermore, Islamic leadership structures help foster social cohesion by bridging ethnic and national divides within the refugee population. The emphasis on unity (*wahda*), brotherhood (*ukhuwa*), and the concept of *Ummah* (universal Muslim community) promotes peaceful coexistence among diverse groups. Through sermons, dialogues, and teachings, leaders reinforce the Islamic message of equality, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

5.2.3 Community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

Based on the study findings, it is concluded that community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution is generally strong within Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement. The majority of community members respects and seeks guidance from Islamic leaders due to their perceived moral authority, commitment to justice, and adherence to Islamic values. This trust enhances the leaders' ability to mediate disputes effectively, foster social harmony, and prevent the escalation of conflicts in a fragile and diverse refugee context. The study revealed that Islamic religious leaders are often consulted before decisions are made in conflict situations, indicating their central role in shaping peaceful and spiritually grounded responses. The research also found that confidentiality in handling disputes is a valued trait that enhances trust in religious leaders. Many community members believe that Islamic leaders handle sensitive matters with discretion, in accordance with the Prophet's teachings.

5.3: Recommendations

The following recommendations were made for consideration and possible implementation.

5.3.1 To evaluate the use of Islamic doctrinal teachings in conflict resolution among refugees in Kyangwali Settlement

The study recommends that the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) should integrate Islamic doctrinal approaches like *Sulh*, forgiveness and non-violence into refugee peace building frameworks.

The study recommends that Islamic Religious Leaders should intensify the teaching of Qur'anic principles on patience, forgiveness and justice through Friday sermons, Qur'an schools and youth forums. These teachings should be linked directly to real-life refugee experiences.

The study further recommends that Muslim States and International Islamic Institutions should support theological training and educational materials on conflict resolution for refugee-based religious leaders.

5.3.2 To examine the influence of Islamic religious leadership structures in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

The study recommends that Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs) should partner with Islamic leaders to establish formalized Shura councils (consultative bodies) at block or zone level to ensure collective and inclusive decision-making that involves elders, women and youth.

The study recommends that OPM and Humanitarian Partners should formalize partnerships with Islamic leaders by involving them in inter-agency conflict prevention platforms and trainings, especially in ethnic, gender-based, and intergenerational dispute contexts.

5.3.3 To analyze community trust in Islamic religious leaders as mediators in conflict resolution in Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement

The study recommends that Islamic Religious Leaders should enhance community trust by maintaining strict confidentiality in conflict mediation, ensuring neutrality in inter-ethnic and intra-family disputes and leading by example in both personal conduct and public service.

The study recommends that Refugee Communities should be encouraged to engage Islamic leaders early in conflict situations and support ethical leadership by demanding accountability, fairness, and openness from their mediators.

5.4: Areas for further research

The current study focused on assessing Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda with focus on Kyangwali Refugee Resettlement as the case study. Further research should;

- ✓ Examine how different religious traditions compare with Islamic approaches among refugees
- ✓ Evaluate the outcomes of Islamic doctrinal tools and compare them to formal resolution systems.
- ✓ Examine barriers and opportunities for including women in Islamic conflict resolution practices

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE (SAQ):

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am a student of Nkumba University carrying out an academic research on, assessment of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda; a case study of kyangwali refugee resettlement as a requirement for the award of a master of International Relations and Diplomacy of Nkumba University. Please feel free to answer all questions below by ticking where applicable. The information will only be used for academic purposes and shall be treated with utmost confidentiality

SECTION A: Background information of respondents

Please tick in the appropriate box corresponding to your answer.

1. Age bracket

20 – 25	26 - 30 years	31 - 35 years	36 - 40	41 - 50	55 years and above

2. Gender of respondents

Male	Female

3. Highest education level attained

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	University	If others, specify

4. Marital Status

Single	Married	Cohabiting	Separated

5. Occupation

Religious Leader	Local Leader	Refugee Community Member	Humanitarian Official
Community			

Services			

6. Duration of stay in the settlement

Less than 1 year	1 – 3 years	4 – 6 years	More than 6 years

Please respond to each item in subsequent sections using the following scale by ticking the appropriate option.

5 = Strongly Agree,
4 = Agree,
3 = Not sure,
2 = Disagree,
1 = Strongly Disagree

SECTION B: TO EVALUATE THE USE OF ISLAMIC DOCTRINAL TEACHINGS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMONG REFUGEES IN KYANGWALI SETTLEMENT

Please Tick the appropriate alternative, Key: Where SA-strongly agree, A- agree, NS-not sure, SD-strongly disagree D-disagree.

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Islamic teachings emphasize peace and reconciliation among conflicting parties					
Islamic teachings promote forgiveness over revenge in conflict situations					
The Qur'an provides relevant guidance on resolving disputes peacefully					
Forgiving others, especially when one has power, is encouraged in Islam to improve relationships					
Islamic leaders serve as mediators in resolving interpersonal or community conflicts					
Most refugees accept Islamic approaches to resolving conflicts					
The practice of Sulh helps reduce hatred and restore mutual respect in the community					
Non-violence (Rifq wa Al-Rahma) is emphasized in Islamic conflict resolution teachings					

SECTION C: TO EXAMINE THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN KYANGWALI REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

Please Tick the appropriate alternative. Key: Where, SA=strongly agree, A= Agree, NS= Not sure, D=Disagree, SD=strongly disagree

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
The leadership structure among Islamic clerics is clear and well respected in the refugee community					
Islamic religious leaders encourage consultation and collective decision-making when resolving conflicts					
Community elders and influencers play an effective role in conflict mediation					
Conflict resolutions led by Islamic leaders are generally accepted and respected by the parties involved					
Islamic leaders work with humanitarian or government actors to address conflict issues in the settlement					
Islamic leadership structures in Kyangwali help bridge gaps between ethnic or national groups					
Qadis ensure that conflict resolutions follow Islamic legal principles (Sharia)					
Religious councils bring together community leaders to find inclusive and fair solutions to disputes					

SECTION D: TO ANALYZE COMMUNITY TRUST IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS LEADERS AS MEDIATORS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN KYANGWALI REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

Please Tick the appropriate alternative

Key: SA=strongly agree, A= Agree, NS= Not sure, D=Disagree, SD=strongly disagree

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Community respects the guidance of Islamic religious leaders in conflict resolution					
Islamic leaders in the settlement are seen as neutral parties during conflict mediation					
Community members seek advice of Islamic religious leaders before taking action in conflict situations					
Islamic religious leaders are accessible and willing to listen when community members face disputes					
The community believes Islamic leaders keep conflict discussions confidential					
Islamic religious leaders lead by example, which increases people's trust in them as conflict mediators					
Islamic leaders are committed to ensuring peace and justice for everyone in the community					
Islamic leaders work to unite the community rather than divide it during times of conflict					

NKUMBA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

OPM & Humanitarian Officials

Dear respondent,

I am a student of Nkumba University carrying out an academic research on, assessment of Islamic religious leadership on conflict resolution in refugee settlements in Uganda; a case study of kyangwali refugee resettlement as a requirement for the award of a master of International Relations and Diplomacy of Nkumba University. Please feel free to answer all questions below by ticking where applicable. The information will only be used for academic purposes and shall be treated with utmost confidentiality

Section A: Biographical Data

1. Name (Optional): _____
2. Position/Title: _____
3. Organization: _____
4. Gender: ☐ Prefer not to say ☐ Female ☐ Male
5. Years of Experience Working in Humanitarian Operations: _____
6. Years of Engagement in Refugee Resettlement Contexts (e.g., Kyangwali): _____

1. How are Islamic religious leadership structures integrated into conflict resolution efforts in Kyangwali?

   .....
2. Do current refugee policies support or limit the role of faith-based actors in peace building?

   .....
3. How is the legitimacy of Islamic religious leaders built and sustained in Kyangwali's multi-faith context?

   .....
4. What effect does community trust in Islamic religious leaders have on social cohesion and long-term peace?

   .....

5. What conflict resolution methods do Islamic leaders use and how do these compare with formal legal systems? .....
   .....
6. How are Islamic principles applied or adapted in Kyangwali's refugee context?
   .....
7. How do humanitarian agencies engage with Islamic leaders in conflict resolution?
   .....
8. What can be done to strengthen collaboration between formal institutions and Islamic leaders? .....
   .....
9. What training or capacity-building would improve Islamic leaders' conflict resolution skills in refugee settings? .....
   .....
10. How can faith-based mediation be institutionalized without losing its community-based character?.....
    .....

Appendix 3: Table for determining a sample from a definite population, 1970

N	*S*	*N*	*S*	*N*	*S*
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	1000000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970