

# Working in Areas of Conflict: A Workshop for Human Rights Defenders



## Proceedings & Resources

Sunset Hotel Gulu

25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

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## Foreword

Despite the ongoing peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army that has terrorised Northern and Eastern Uganda for two decades, human rights defenders (HRDs) in this region continue to face a multitude of challenges in executing their most courageous work of defending the rights of others.

Having had the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with so many frontline human rights defenders at this event has been rewarding and motivating for the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network to continuously work towards their better protection.

I want to use this opportunity to thank all participants for their attendance, their valuable input and the outstanding human rights work they do. Through collaborative efforts we shall achieve the respect of human rights and fundamental freedom in the end.

Our appreciation also goes out to the resource persons from Amnesty International and Caritas Counseling Centre for the insight provided on issues pertinent to the work of human rights defenders. Continued information sharing is key to strengthening the capacity of defenders and henceforth increase their ability to protect the rights of others.

Special thanks also go to our long standing partner, the National Endowment for Democracy that has made this event possible.

I further thank all the staff members at the Secretariat who worked tirelessly to make this workshop happen and also helped compile this crucial report.

The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project vows to continue its work towards a better protection of human rights defenders and providing support to those at risk.



Hassan Shire Sheikh

Chairperson

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project/Network

# 1 Introduction

The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project is designed to strengthen the work of human rights defenders (HRDs) by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and by enhancing their capacity for effectively defending human rights. Its activities focus on Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Somaliland, Sudan including Southern Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

Much of this region has experienced massive human rights abuses going back many years, in the context of single-party and military dictatorships, struggles for democracy, civil wars, and in the extreme case of Somalia, the collapse of the state.

The Project envisions a region in which the human rights of every citizen as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are respected and upheld.

Our mission is to maximize the protection of human rights defenders working in the sub-region and to enhance the awareness of human rights work through linkages with national, regional and international like-minded entities.

The Project's actions are guided by the following objectives:

- To protect and defend human rights defenders in the region;
- To build the capacity of human rights defenders in the region;
- To advocate and raise public awareness and profiles of human rights defenders in the region.

Human rights defenders are women and men working for the promotion and protection of nationally, regionally and internationally recognized human rights, including those working on civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights through peaceful means as recognized by the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted on 9 December 1998.

Resultant from their work, human rights defenders face a multitude of challenges including; harassment, cruel and degrading punishments, torture, intimidation, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings and detention in unauthorized detention centers. Sometimes they are subjected to dehumanizing and demoralizing public treatment including smear campaigns, political persecution and vilification.

In this regard, the Project is making effort to implement its set objectives in the following areas;

**Protection:** The Project offers an internship programme for human rights defenders enabling them continue to pursue their human rights activities in a safer working environment and providing for trauma counseling and rehabilitation.

**Advocacy:** Developing effective media linkages, raising the profile and visibility of human rights defenders and making their challenges known to activists, decision-makers

and other stakeholders within and beyond the region to ensure better respect of their rights.

**Capacity Building:** Equipping human rights defenders with skills that enable them to enhance the efficiency of their work and ensure better individual protection through improved personal capacities and familiarity with handling situations of crisis and threat.

## 2 Working in Areas of Conflict: A Workshop for Human Rights Defenders

It is under its capacity building programme that the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project organized a workshop for human rights defenders working in areas of conflict taking place from the 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2007 at Sunset Hotel Gulu. The workshop attracted a total of 19 participants working in human rights organisations from conflict affected districts in Northern and Eastern Uganda, namely: Gulu, Lira, Moroto, Soroti, Katakwi, Kaabong, Kitgum, Pader and Amuria. The main objectives of the workshop were to;

1. To train HRDs on existing instruments of HRDs' protection and thereby enhance their knowledge on procedures in case of violations;
2. To train HRDs in security tactics appropriate under adverse working conditions;
3. Collect views on HRDs' needs for better protection and support within those frameworks communicate these recommendations to relevant stakeholders for evaluation of existing regulations and opportunities for improvement;

The selection of participants was conducted in cooperation with EHAHRDP's partners throughout Uganda to reliably identify those benefiting most from the content of this workshop.

### Day 1

The first day of the workshop was commenced with welcoming remarks by the Chairman of the organization, Mr. Hassan Shire Sheikh, officially opening the workshop and thanking participants for their attendance. In his brief speech he described the origin of the Project based on the initiative of defenders to organize themselves and provide for a better protection in the region of the East and Horn of Africa. He explained that the workshop was organized based on recommendations contained in a the Plan of Action that stressed the need of capacity building among defenders to strengthen their ability for better self-protection and enhanced efficiency in their work. He encouraged participants to actively involve themselves in the workshop session and to learn from each other.

As an introductory session, the human rights defenders were asked to provide information about their area of work and their experience as HRDs in a conflict area. Many of them described challenges of defending rights in an area where state and non-state actors are often responsible for grave human rights abuses and lack of accountability structures (see short profiles and testimonies in the Annex of this report).

The participants were then briefed on the content of the workshop and encouraged to shape the outcome by interacting with the resource persons and among themselves as much as possible (the agenda of the workshop and list of participants can be found in the Annex of this report).

The workshop sessions on the first day were dedicated to the existing protection mechanisms for human rights defenders on regional and international level to equip the participants with the relevant understanding of which avenues to utilize in improving their own security and the guarding of their rights as defenders.<sup>1</sup>

### **Hassan Shire Sheikh, Chairperson EHAHRDP**

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#### **International and regional instruments for the protection of human rights defenders**

Currently several mechanisms and instruments for a better protection of human rights defenders exist on regional and international level, i.e. the UN special mechanism, the African regional mechanism and the European Union mechanism. They stipulate the rights of human rights defenders and the responsibilities of states to respect these rights.

##### **The UN mechanism**

The UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (commonly known as the “Declaration on Human Rights Defenders”) was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in 1998 after an elaborate lobbying and consultation process.

By adopting the Declaration, member states recognized the plight of HRDs worldwide, the right of HRDs to defend human rights and the need for international cooperation in the protection of this right to defend human rights. The declaration reaffirms that individuals, groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations have an important role and a responsibility in contributing to the promotion of the right of everyone to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights

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<sup>1</sup> This report will provide summaries of the presentations delivered by the resource persons. Participants had received a detailed handout during the presentations.

instruments can be fully realized. It articulates existing rights in a way that makes it easier to apply them to the practical role and situation of human rights defenders. It specifies how the rights contained in the major human rights instruments apply to human rights defenders. It furthermore contains principles and rights based on human rights standards protected in other international instruments, such as the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly, and the right to freedom of movement.

The Declaration outlines some specific duties of States and the responsibilities of everyone with regard to defending human rights. Article 2 states that each State shall adopt such legislative, administrative and other steps as may be necessary to ensure that the rights and freedoms referred to in the present Declaration are effectively guaranteed. Article 11 makes special reference to the responsibilities of persons exercising professions that can affect the human rights of others, and is especially relevant for police officers, lawyers, judges, etc.

Articles 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13 of the Declaration provide specific protections to human rights defenders, among others the rights to seek the protection and realization of human rights at the national and international levels; to conduct human rights work individually and in association with others; to form associations and non-governmental organizations; to meet or assemble peacefully; to seek, obtain, receive and hold information relating to human rights.

In 2000, the UN Commission on Human Rights adopted resolution 2000/61 calling on the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on human rights defenders<sup>2</sup>. This was the first mechanism to be created at the international level to protect human rights defenders in accordance with the rights enshrined in the Declaration. Ms. Hina Jilani, a noted human rights attorney from Pakistan, was appointed as the first Special Representative.

The Special Representative undertakes activities in complete independence of any State, is not a United Nations staff member and does not receive a salary. The Special Representative's mandate is to seek, receive, examine and respond to information on human rights defenders, promoting the implementation of the Declaration by establishing cooperation and conduct dialogue with Governments and other interested actors and recommend effective strategies better to protect human rights defenders.<sup>3</sup>

The "protection" of human rights defenders is the Special Representative's overriding concern. Protection is understood to include the protection of defenders themselves and the protection of their right to defend human rights. This includes political, legal and practical efforts that improve the environment in which human rights defenders work.

The Special Representative tries to be available for human rights defenders by receiving information including those of rights violations to raise them with member states as well as attend human rights events on national, regional and international level for information exchange and networking purposes.

The Special Representative maintains regular contacts with States through forums such as the annual sessions of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva and the General Assembly in New York during which the Special Representative presents annual reports to States, responds to their questions and can meet with individual State delegations to discuss issues of concern,

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<sup>2</sup> Contact details of the Special Representative for submissions or correspondence can be found in the resource section of this report.

<sup>3</sup> The Special Representative's mandate is spelt out in Paragraph 3 of the Commission on Human Rights resolution 2000/61.

including individual cases. More specific contacts are conducted on a bilateral basis in meetings or in writing. The Special Representative also takes up individual cases of human rights violations committed against human rights defenders with the States. Information on such cases is received from a variety of sources, including State authorities, non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, the media and individual human rights defenders.

### **The African regional mechanism**

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights is the first regional human rights body to create a specific procedure to deal with the protection of defenders' rights with the first Special Rapporteur<sup>4</sup> being appointed during the 35th Ordinary Session, held from 21 May to 4 June 2004 in Banjul, The Gambia. The Special Rapporteur's mandate includes among others to seek, receive, examine and to act upon information on the situation of human rights defenders in Africa, provide reports to the ordinary sessions of the



Hassan Shire Sheikh during his presentation

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ACHPR, cooperate and engage with relevant stakeholders on relevant issues and develop and recommend effective strategies to better protect human rights defenders. To carry out her mandate, the Special Rapporteur receives and examines information from a wide range of sources, including NGOs, and issues urgent appeals regarding violations against human rights defenders in the region. The Special Representative has also encouraged individuals and NGOs to submit cases concerning human rights defenders to the African Commission. Under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the ACHPR is empowered to receive and consider from individuals and organisations (Article 55). Anybody can submit a communication to the ACHPR denouncing a violation of human rights. The complainant or author of the communication need not be related to the victim of the abuse, but the victim must be mentioned. All communications must be written, and addressed to the Secretary or the Chairman of the ACHPR. There is no form or special format that must be followed in writing the communication.

### **The European Union mechanism**

The European Union has issued Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders providing practical suggestions for enhancing EU action in relation to the protection of human rights defenders. The Guidelines can be used in contacts with third countries at all levels as well as in multilateral human rights fora, in order to support and strengthen ongoing efforts by the Union to promote

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<sup>4</sup> Contact details of the Special Rapporteur for submissions or correspondence can be found in the resource section of this report.



and encourage respect for the right to defend human rights. The Guidelines also provide for interventions by the Union for human rights defenders at risk and suggest practical means to support and assist human rights defenders. An important element of the Guidelines is support for the Special Procedures of the UN Commission on Human Rights, including the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders and appropriate regional mechanisms to protect human rights defenders. The Guidelines will assist EU Missions (Embassies and Consulates of EU Member States and European Commission Delegations) in their approach to human rights defenders.

The operational part of the Guideline is meant to identify ways and means to effectively work towards the promotion and protection of human rights defenders in third countries. Heads of Mission are requested to provide periodic reports on the human rights situation in their countries of accreditation. They are sought to adopt a proactive policy towards human rights defenders. The EU's objective is to influence third countries to carry out their obligations to respect the rights of human rights defenders and to protect them from attacks and threats from non-state actors. The overall objective should be to bring about an environment where human rights defenders can operate freely. The EU will make its objectives known as an integral part of its human rights policy and will stress the importance it attaches to the protection of human rights defenders.

### **The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project**

Despite the existing mechanisms of protection, the situation of human rights defenders has not significantly improved. Civil society has not yet taken advantage of the content of the UN Declaration. Promoting the implementation of the Declaration at national level is still a major challenge. Africa needs a human rights protection strategy that will offer greater protection, visibility and legitimacy to human rights defenders in Africa, so that they can more effectively carry out human rights work, and by so doing expand the environment in which human rights defenders are able to exercise their right to defend human rights.

The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP), organiser of this workshop, was formed to address the challenges faced by defenders throughout the region.

### **Group work**

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Ensuring full participation and application of the information provided during the presentation, working groups were formed with the task to file a submission of rights violations to the Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders. A subsequent feedback session where fellow participants and the facilitator assessed the outcome of each group's work was intended to show gaps in the submission and stress specific areas of importance once more.

Group 1 chose the example of the arrest and detention of Fatuma Laker, 28 years old married with 5 children. Fatuma was a housewife and paralegal with the Human Rights Focus in Gulu. She was arrested on the basis that she had misguided women to not obey their husbands and had been held for more than a week despite the constitutional provision that describes detention without charge beyond 48 hours as illegal. Efforts by the sub-county chiefs to have her released were futile. An update of the case was provided stating that the case had been referred by police and a date set for hearing.



A participant stressing his point during the discussions  
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The facilitator remarked that the letter presented by the group was not addressed to anyone, stressing that the contact details need to be correct to reach the addressee. He furthermore commented that the group had not indicated what it wanted the Special Representative to do. However, most importantly he pointed out that this was not a case that needed submission to the SR as national mechanisms for redress were currently applied, i.e. the case was referred to police and a hearing date was set.

Group 2 chose a case on the disappearance of journalist Muggaga James, 35 years old and working as an investigative reporter. The submission was addressed to the SR and copied to the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders of the ACHPR, Amnesty International and Human Rights Focus. Muggaga had a lead story in Daily Monitor about disarmament process in Karamoja “Genocide in Karamoja” was the headline, photos showing dead women, children and animals were also published. He later received threats on the phone and was abducted on his way to the police to report the case. His wife and Okot reported his disappearance to the police and report to UHRC. Since then, his whereabouts were unknown, police and UHRC are still investigating. The office of the RDC instituted a commission of inquiry and fellow journalists went on a strike. The facilitator commended the group on their choice of example but stated again that it had not been made clear what they wanted the SR to do. He furthermore encouraged participants to provide updates to the SR on a specific submission whenever new developments had taken place.

The following presentation, again delivered by EHAHRDP Chairperson Hassan Shire Sheikh, focused on Shadow Reporting, a mechanism for NGOs engagement in the UN/ACHPR mechanisms and contribution to States’ compliance with international standards of human rights.

## Hassan Shire Sheikh, EHAHRDP

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### Shadow Reporting to the UN and ACHPR

Central to the UN system and the international standards of human rights are the treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Treaty bodies (TB) are committees of experts established to monitor the compliance of state parties with the provisions of treaties. To do so, TB require the support of civil society and non-state actors. One way for non-governmental organizations to contribute to states' compliance is to produce shadow reports providing an independent assessment of the Government's adherence to the standards they have subscribed to.

Shadow reports are crucial to provide a complete and comprehensive picture of the human right situation in a given country by presenting an alternative view, highlights gaps and demonstrate where state reports might have omitted or minimized problems by focusing on accomplishments and on the legislative framework rather than its implementation. It furthermore seeks to ensure greater scrutiny of States' efforts internationally and domestically and has the potential to stimulate public debate. The compilation of shadow reports enables NGOs to influence national human rights policies



Participants listening attentively to the presentation © EHAHRDP

and also strengthens their ability to protect and promote human rights through international mechanisms. The information provided is even more important with regard to the review procedures, i.e. the examination of countries in the absence of reports.

State reports are due at specific intervals. An initial report is due by States parties within 1 or 2 (CESCR, CRC) years after entry into force of the treaty. Thereafter they are required to submit periodic reports on progress made: every 4 years: HRC, CAT, CEDAW, CERD and every 5 years: CESCR, CRC, CMW.

Information on a state report may be obtained from:

- The government;
- The secretariat;
- Consulting the last concluding observations for that country;

- The Committee's page on the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/>.
- The Treaty Body database: <http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf>

Shadow reports require sound preparation. It is essential to be informed about the State report, i.e. when is/was it due; has it been sent; list of issues addressed therein. Contact should be made with the OHCHR and the committee's country rapporteur, other relevant local and international NGOs, the UN presence in the country (UNHCR, UNICEF, etc), the government itself and the media. It is crucial to carefully consider organisational goals, available resources and capacity in preparing a shadow and remember that the government will be provided by the Secretariat with the shadow report.

The Committees supervising the compliance of states with regards to the treaties are not permanent bodies. They meet each year in two or three sessions of usually three weeks each, at the UN headquarters in Geneva or New York. At each session the committees prepare a list of countries to be reviewed for future sessions. The Country rapporteur is responsible for reading all the background material provided on a given country and presenting his/her analysis of that information to the Committee. Countries are not placed in the queue for review until their report is submitted. NGOs can expect that country reports may not be reviewed until, on average, 7 to 20 months after submission. Their report is considered by a sub-committee/pre-sessional working group which along with country rapporteur will establish a list of issues. There may be a written exchange of questions and information before the session (list of issues and replies).

In preparation of the report, it is highly recommended to for the country concerned to: contact OHCHR and the Country Rapporteur and have advice about the report, content and format, when and where it should be submitted and facilitate informal contacts during the session. It is possible to invite the Country Rapporteur to the country to attend a briefing of national NGOs, especially if NGOs cannot be in Geneva during the consideration of the State report. The OHCHR Secretariat will provide contact details of the Country Rapporteur. Otherwise, contacts may be held through the Secretariat.

It can prove to be helpful to engage in a coalition of NGOs and come up with a single consolidated report to enhance the impact and credibility of the submission as this has the potential to demonstrate a consensus voice in favour of positions taken in report and can avoid duplication and risk of contradiction. Also, it is more difficult for the government to discredit such a report. Providing a consolidated report can enhance effectiveness making consideration of the NGO report by Committee members more likely, since they can't be expected to give adequate attention to multiple reports. Some form of affiliation with reputable organisations may enhance the status and credibility of less-known local NGOs.

UN agencies with a presence in the country often submit **confidential comments** to the Committees. Local NGOs can make contact and interact with them, providing information and influencing their submission.

It is useful for domestic NGOs to discuss the preparation of the report with the government concerned. Let the government's delegation know what questions NGOs will recommend members for the Committee to ask during consideration of the report.

The media can be a valuable partner in telling the public about the report. Approaching international media that cover UN events is another way to enhance NGOs' advocacy work in connection with the Committees' consideration of State report. NGOs might consider briefing people responsible for the media about those issues, the scope and content of the Convention, and the procedures of the Committee.

### Structure of the report

Shadow reports should preferably have the following structure:

a) The **executive summary** should give essential information allowing readers to instantly get clear idea of the main issues raised in the shadow report and should be no more than three pages long. It is recommended to use language that the Committee could use in asking questions and drafting concluding observations. The information presented must be concise, accurate, and carefully selected from the full report. All information about the article of the Covenant / Convention can be reduced to one single paragraph, and every important paragraph of the report can be reduced to one sentence!

b) The **table of contents** gives a clear idea about the content and enable committee members to refer to particular points that they are interested in.

c) The **introduction** should contain a short description of the mandate and nature of NGOs and the methodology used in the preparation of the shadow report.

d) In the **main part of the report**, information of the report should be organised according to the Committees' guidelines for State reports, usually article by article, not by issue. The information should be presented in a concise and succinct way, reliable and not abusive. It is recommended to avoid using overly political tone nor an imperative tone. The report should provide a clear indication of the provisions breached and in what way and should be no more than 30 pages. Each item should include: a description of the issues in the country; shortcomings in the State report; and questions that the Committee may raise. Describe the problems, the evidence and the specific suggestions for change. Indicate who in the government is in a position to the suggested change. It is crucial to prioritise issues as the Committee will not be able to focus adequate attention on more than a few issues. Include analysis of reservations and suggest the changes that would allow for withdrawal.

e) Include **recommendations** for action by the government. They should be concrete, suggesting specific action. Using language from General Comments or prior Concluding observations could be useful. Recommendations should be strategised. Refer to prior concluding observations, if Committee's previous recommendations have been fully implemented.

f) As **sources**, a wide range of types of information can be considered in order to illustrate the NGO's own analysis of State action or practices, such as:

- Statistics including information in how, when, where and by whom they have been collected. These are most useful if disaggregated by age, material status, class, ethnicity circumstances as well as sex.
- Results of academic research;
- Official documents issued by government authorities;
- Specific cases and testimonies;

- Court cases

Keep in mind that the Committee experts read the shadow report to obtain specific information that can help them evaluate the government report. The Committee experts cannot be familiar with the political and economic background of every country. Therefore they may need contextual information to understand the issues. The Committee experts always have a limited amount of time and want to receive information about the most pressing issues in a concise format.

NGO participation to the session helps maximising the impact of the NGO submission. There are various opportunities for NGOs to take part in the process. Informal participation can comprise of informal contacts with OHCHR, and single committee members as well as informal NGO meetings. Formal participation may include the submission of information, written or oral statements to the pre-sessional working groups or plenary. NGOs that are unable to come to Geneva can still follow the meeting by consultation as press releases are available on the OHCHR website. A press release is issued for every meeting on the following day. Summary records are the official transcript of the Committees' work, which can be obtained from OHCHR website or ordered from the UN documentation desk. They are issued in English and French, but they are only available a few weeks later.

It should be noted that besides shadow reports, NGOs can submit any kind of relevant information, i.e. thematic reports, press clippings, video tapes, reports, academic publications, newsletters etc.

The real success of the treaty bodies' work largely depends on an effective follow-up process. NGOs can play a very important role in the following up on the Committees' recommendations by widely disseminating concluding observations, monitoring government action and reporting to the Committees' follow up coordinator, pre-sessional working groups and country rapporteur. The follow up also represents the first stage of the preparation of the next shadow report!

The first day of the workshop was then closed after a brief discussion on the presentation about shadow reporting where participants were able to clarify issues and ask concrete questions regarding the compilation of a shadow report in their specific circumstances.

## Day 2

The second day of the workshop commenced with a presentation by Christian Mukosa, Campaigner for Central Africa at Amnesty International, based at the Africa Regional Office in Kampala. Mr. Mukosa's presentation sought to introduce and deepen participants' knowledge on advocacy and campaigning in the quest to protect human rights. A summary of the presentation is provided below.

## Christian Mukosa, Amnesty International

### Advocacy campaigning and networking: How to mobilise support for protection in situations of conflict

Campaigning is defined as organized course of action to achieve change. To successfully campaign it is key to:

- Focus by having specific objectives and concentrating your energy.
- Be clear in your objectives, action and communication (both internal/external)
- Be credible in your message and as messenger
- Be relevant in connecting with people and offering a solution to a problem
- Pick the right time
- Being committed in seeing the campaign/action through.

*"In a campaign it is important to target practice change rather than only the policy change!"*

#### Developing a campaign strategy

A campaign strategy must be realistic and feasible in relation to the situation it seeks to address. The following steps can provide guidance in drafting a strategy:

- 1) Identify the issue: Choose the issue you want to work on.
- 2) Analyse the problem: Look at the causes of the problem. What part of the problem should you focus on? What would be the solution?
- 3) Draft objectives: Come up with 2 or 3 SMART objectives. You may need to change these after you've done your internal and external analyses
- 4) External analysis: Examine the external environment. Do a SWOT or a PESTLE to look at all the influencing factors, stakeholders, and contributors to the problem in question. Start considering who your targets will be, and what the pressure points are. How will you influence them? Who are your allies? Who are your enemies? Whose stance can we change through campaigning?
- 5) Internal analysis/Capacity assessment: What are your resources? Who will campaign with you? Do you have any money? How much time have you got? What are your organisations own strengths and weaknesses? Be sure not to come up with a plan that you cannot deliver!
- 6) Develop an influencing strategy and finalise objectives: For each objective, describe how you plan to achieve it. State your targets, and explain a rationale as to why they will be influenced.



Christian Mukosa during his presentation

- 7) **Action Plan:** Now choose the activities you need to organise in order to exert the influence outlined above. What activities will hit your pressure points?
- 8) **Implement:** Now you have to actually deliver the whole plan. This also involves opening a feedback loop with all participants in the campaign. Keep monitoring activities and the impacts you are having. You may need to adapt your campaign plan based on external advancements in the situation.
- 9) **Evaluate:** Compare impact against your objectives, attributing where possible to the interventions you have organised. Learn from what worked, and especially what didn't work.

### Having an impact – How do we effect change?

- Identify your audiences (e.g. the public, the media, the government, NGO's and other groups)
- What do you want them to do?
  - Public: take notice/respond/take action
  - Media: publish an article
  - Government: change legislation/make a statement
  - NGO's: joint action with AI
- How can you encourage them to play their role? E.g. by writing letters, lobbying, providing media materials

### Lobbying and campaigning

Approaching home governments is important because Governments have power, can influence other governments, can change legislation and practice and can strengthen international human rights standards and mechanisms. Also, politicians lead as well as follow public opinion.

When lobbying Government on an issue, it is important to be well prepared to ensure credibility and validity of the requests presented. Prepare your meeting well, have a clear achievable goal. Listen actively to others' points of view which allows you to state your case precisely in response. Bringing along relevant documentation can further support your position. Be specific about what you are asking for and when you're unable to answer a question directly, make a follow-up call. This is better than giving wrong information. A follow-up visit will stress your determination in achieving your goal.

### Some techniques of campaigning<sup>5</sup>

- **Protest and persuasion:** formal statements, communications with a wider audience, group representation, symbolic public acts, pressure on individuals, drama and music, processions, Honouring the dead, public assemblies, withdrawal and renunciation...
- **Social non-cooperation:** Ostracism of persons, non-cooperation with institutions, withdrawal from the social system ...

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<sup>5</sup> Gene Sharp in the Manual for action developed 198 non-violent tactics (Martin Jelfs, Action Resources Group, 1982). The list is attached to this presentation in a separate 2-pages documents.



- **Economic non-cooperation/boycotts:** actions by consumers, actions by workers/producers, actions by middle people, actions by owners and management, actions by holders of financial resources, actions by the Government...
- **Economic non-cooperation/strikes:** symbolic strikes, agricultural strikes, strike by special groups, ordinary industrial strike, restricted strike, multi-industry strike ...
- **Political non-cooperation:** Reject of authority, citizen's no cooperation with the Government, citizen's alternative to obedience, actions by government personnel, Domestic Governmental action, international Governmental action...

### **Media and campaigning - How to use the media to bring change in a policy or practice**

Planning your work with the media involves identifying target audiences and finding relevant media contacts. The media has the potential to;

- Play a key role
- Shape/mobilize public opinion
- Generate action
- Influence government policy
- Shape public perception of the campaign
- Publicise the major concerns

Putting this into practice means identifying newspapers, magazines, radio, TV programs which most influence public opinion on issues of concern both national and international, are most read, listened to or watched and have journalists with interest/commitment to human rights.

Practical steps are to:

- Centralize and coordinate media work
- Prepare up-to-date list of media contacts and maintain it!
- Decide how you will disseminate information to them
- Identify "friendly" journalists, editors, etc and decide how they should be approached and develop relationships with them
- Look at media opportunities, e.g. important dates in the HRs calendar to use as a peg for a HRs story; photo opportunity
- Be reliable
- Be accurate – know your facts
- Provide useful information, clear stories

When organizing a press conference it is essential to provide sufficient notice for those invited and ensure to choose the best time locally and internationally. The venue needs to be accessible and appropriate. In leading through the event, identify someone to chair to announce the speakers and guide the presentations. A follow up on the outcome is recommended.

Giving interviews on campaign issues can be important for spreading the message further. It is recommendable to agree on a time and place and define the issues you shall respond to. One has every right to be told the questions in advance. It is important to be well prepared. Making a checklist of main points you want to cover may be helpful. In preparation of the interview it is good to think it through, anticipate possible questions and be aware of the audience you are

talking to. Where possible, use individual cases to illustrate a point. This creates a story around the issue.

### Networking - There is strength in numbers

Cooperation and coordination among NGOs can have many advantages. It gives opportunity to;

- Exchange of skills and sharing of information among NGOs and other institutions;
- Ensure collective human rights activism;
- Information sharing, action-oriented programmes and advocacy work;
- Human rights workers being universally feted and supported
- Encourage other NGOs to work with you on a particular issue/case.

When lobbying on relevant issues it is crucial to maintain liaison with individual as well as co-ordinate with national human rights networks. Depending on the issue, it can prove worthwhile to initiate co-ordinated country- regional initiatives in order to maximize impact.

### Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is a continual process of gathering data on what is being done, what else is happening, what are the reactions of the targets and how the beneficiaries are being affected.

Evaluation is a periodic process of reviewing monitoring data and drawing conclusion from it. These aims at informing or modifying current actions plans, learning from experience and improve future planning as well as providing accountability for beneficiaries, supporters, donors, managers, trustees and staff.

Impact assessment is a process of measuring how effective you have been in achieving your aims and objectives.

Challenges to monitoring and to evaluation are the complexity of the campaign environment and the potentially long and unpredictable timescale. In addition, one has to consider the cost of gathering data, lack of objective data and the difficulties in reliably identifying causalities, i.e. attributing impact to the action.

Important questions to ask when evaluating a campaign:

- Did we achieve our objectives?
- What went well? Less well?
- What have we learnt for the next time?
- How efficiently did we use our inputs to achieve our outputs?
- How much did the change in policy have an impact on the lives of our “beneficiaries?”

*Just looking at the final impact has a limited value. Constant monitoring and evaluation helps you to steer your campaign as you go along, and helps you learn how effective the different activities have been.*

## Group work

Two working groups were formed to answer the same questions with the intention to apply the information provided in the presentation. The first task was to select an activity that had been implemented locally and explain what had been done. The second task demanded to draw a SWOT analysis for a human rights network in Northern Uganda, while the third assignment required to name 20 campaign techniques for the protection of civilians in Northern Uganda.

Each group provided their examples and faced the plenary for further discussions and criticism of their tasks. In response question one, the facilitator Mr. Mukosa reminded participants to be smart, be specific, be realistic when planning a campaign. Instead of formulating broad objectives, it is important to focus and prioritise. With reference to the SWOT analysis for the human rights network, he urged participants to be aware of the challenges of such initiatives and being realistic on how to address them. As a particular example he mentioned the difference of interests that bring together defenders in a network and need to streamlined for a common cause.



A participant presenting the result of group work  
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When presenting their selection of campaign techniques, participants were surprised about the vast number of possible actions that can be undertaken to campaign for human rights. A selection of their responses is presented below:

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| ▪ radio talk shows        | ▪ pictorials          |
| ▪ newspaper stories       | ▪ sports activities   |
| ▪ music                   | ▪ poem                |
| ▪ peaceful demonstrations | ▪ radio spot messages |
| ▪ sit down strikes        | ▪ press releases      |
| ▪ banner and placards     | ▪ documentaries       |
| ▪ charity walks           | ▪ peace talks         |
| ▪ protest letters         | ▪ commemoration days  |
| ▪ prayer                  | ▪ community dialogues |
| ▪ drawings                | ▪ newsletters         |
| ▪ drama                   | ▪ short messages      |

This very interactive presentation was followed by a presentation on risk assessment and security management tailored towards the needs of the human rights defenders present at the workshop. The presentation was delivered by Willy Mukendi, Refugee Assistant at Amnesty International Africa Regional Office in Kampala, Uganda. The rationale of this presentation was to identify threats that HRDs in Northern and Eastern Uganda are facing

and equip them with the necessary skills to manage their risks adequately. A summary of his presentation is provided below.

## Willy Mukendi, Amnesty International

### Risk Assessment and Security for HRDs in Northern Uganda

To be able to adequately assess one's security situation, it is necessary to understand key concepts in security management.

**Risk** is constituted by threats that a particular environment may present to the safety and security of the HRDs. Consideration of security risks must include the impact of actions by a human rights organisation on the safety and security of any of its delegates as well as any person with whom they may enter into contact within the context of its mission. Risk can be acceptable given the objectives of specific work if relevant precautions are taken and contingency plans put in place to mitigate and protect against possible events. Risk can also be unacceptable.

**Safety** refers to all issues pertaining to the physical and mental well-being of delegates. It should be the policy of any human rights organisation to seek to provide safe and healthy working conditions for all its delegates.

**Security** refers to all issues that relate to the protection of the delegates and contacts, as well as information, communications, physical assets belonging to the organisation and its reputation.

#### Examples of safety and security threats:

Security Threats		Safety Threats
Abduction, Arrest, etc	Home Invasion	Earthquakes
Ambush	Landmines and UXO	Electrocution
Armed robbery	Letter bombs	Fire
Assassination	Mugging	Flood
Assault	Nuclear incidents	HIV/AIDS
Bombing	Official harassment	Landslides
Blackmail	Open warfare	Malaria
Burglary	Rape, sexual assault	Medical Emergency
Car Jacking	Shelling or bombing	Road Accidents
Cash handling	Staff disgruntlement	Severe Weather
Chemical weapons	Street crime	Stress
Civil disorder	Terrorism	Sexually transmitted diseases
Crossfire	Torture	Travel Accidents

Security Threats		Safety Threats
Death threats	Vandalism	Volcanoes
Extortion	Vehicle Bombs	
Fraud	Vendetta, blood feuds	

## Risk assessment

The terms risk, threat and vulnerability can be confusing to many people:

A **threat** is a danger to you, your organisation or your property.

**Vulnerability** is your level of exposure to a particular threat.

A **Risk** is the likelihood and impact of encountering a threat.

**Risk is a combination of threat and vulnerability: Risk = Threat x Vulnerability**

It is not enough to look at threats or things that may cause us harm on their own. There are many different threats, but if there is no exposure there is no risk. Therefore, risk is not just about the nature of the threat, but also about our exposure to that threat, in other words, our vulnerability.

Vulnerability to a threat is a combination of the probability or likelihood of it happening to you, as well as the possible impact if it did. Different people or groups may have a different level of vulnerability to the same threat.

Risk cannot be eliminated altogether. But it can be reduced, in two main ways:

1. Reduce the risk.
2. Reduce your vulnerability or exposure to the threat.

Best of all, both reduce the threat, and reduce your vulnerability and then the overall risk to you is doubly reduced. Another way of putting this is to reduce both the *likelihood* that it will happen to you and the *impact* of it if it does happen.

A helpful way of considering threats, their relative likelihood, and their impact if they occurred is to plot them on a chart (see below). List the threats you assessed to be present, with the likelihood of each threat occurring, and the impact that it would have if it did occur, on a scale of 1 to 5. For example, murder would have very great impact, so should be rated as 5, though its likelihood may be rated as low – say, 1.

Threat Event	Probability 0-5	Impact 0-5

## Risk assessment on personal level

If good security is about managing risk, then effective and ongoing risk assessments are essential. Risk assessment should not be limited to security managers. All staff at individual level should recognise the importance of being attentive to the risks around them at all times.

**Risks** could include any of the following::

- Safety: vehicle accidents (car, airplane, helicopter, train); Natural hazards (mudslides, floods or earthquakes, rip tides); fire; other accidents (tripping, slipping or falling;drowning); health threats (communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS).
- Security: ethnic, religious, political or racial differences or intolerances; crime; mines and unexploded ordnance; bombs; fighting; theft; kidnapping; rape and sexual violence; public disorder (riots etc.); intimidation and extortion (internal and external to the agency)

If HRDs can assess or recognise the risk attached to these issues they will be more equipped to manage their own security on a personal level.

There are different types of **threats**:

Direct Threats: a specific agency is the intended target.

Indirect Threats: an agency is affected even when not the intended target.

Effective threat assessment should not only identify the threats, but develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the particular threat. This means understanding the patterns and trends.

While it may be difficult to reduce the threat itself, risk to staff and programmes can be reduced by understanding and reducing the **vulnerability** or exposure to the threat.

Develop the habit of assessing risks and reflect on daily activities. This is something that all staff should be engaged in at a personal level and constitutes the first step towards carrying out a personal risk assessment. Using your common sense is also an important part of your personal risk assessment.

To do a personal risk assessment the following questions need to be asked in relation to your daily activities:

- What are the threats (in general and specific) to me?
- What makes me vulnerable to the threats?

Once you have recognised the risks through identifying potential threats and reflecting on your own vulnerability, you can start taking steps to reduce that risk by changing your actions and behaviours. For example, changing your route or the time you travel could make you less vulnerable to a planned car jacking.

Good security is of common concern and a shared responsibility. One individual's neglect can have a collective impact.

## **Risk assessment on organization level**

Key components of a Risk Assessment (useful for missions and reference in your organisation):

- (a) Outline of the mission activities, itinerary and timeframe: This would be a brief summing up of what is in the mission proposal as necessary information for assessing risks
- (b) Profile of the delegates: Highlight aspects that are particularly relevant to security in the mission being considered, e.g. identity details (nationality, ethnicity, gender); individual experience; expertise (including languages); and relevant training (security training, first aid, other). Also relevant is previous experience as HR delegate.
- (c) Contextual analysis: A brief general picture of the political, military or other aspects relevant to security of the destination to be visited.
- (d) Threat analysis: A detailed assessment of the external threats that are expected to be facing the delegates, including whether the individual profile of the delegates make them especially vulnerable to particular threats.

## **Security Management**

The Security Plan/Management describes the specific measures planned to minimize the risks identified in the Risk Assessment. The plan identifies additional mission-specific requirements. As a minimum the Plan must indicate:

### **Assigned responsibilities**

- 1. HRD delegations to destinations with security concerns should consist of at least two delegates, who should stay together as much as possible in the course of the mission.
- 2. The Head of Delegation (HoD) must be designated prior to departure. Normally the HoD will take security decisions. However, other members of the delegation may be delegated the authority to take security decisions instead of the HoD. These roles must be clearly defined and recorded prior to departure.
- 3. The sequence of staff and managers responsible at the Head Office for liaising with and taking specific security decisions (such as a change in the itinerary or means of transport) must be clearly defined.
- 4. The management will take decisions in case of serious incidents, in consultation with other relevant managers.

### **Logistics (accommodation and transport)**

- 1. The type of accommodation that delegates intend to use at each location must be indicated.
- 2. A daily itinerary for each delegate must be drawn and shared with the other delegates and with the Head Office.
- 3. Means of transport to the destination country, and in the country, must be indicated, including the use of hired cars with or without drivers and any use of public transport or taxis.
- 4. Routes to be used to travel between locations to be visited, including condition and security of roads.

### **Communications arrangements**

The maintenance of good communication within the delegation and between the delegation and the Head Office is an essential security component. The security plan should

1. Indicate the communication protocols within the delegation.
2. Specify the arrangements for communicating with the Head Office, with indication of the set times agreed and the sequence of contacts (usually reflecting the authority chain) in case those who are sought first are not available. Indicate the communication protocol in case of failed contact.
3. A frequency of contact of at least once a day should be maintained in high-risk situations with designated delegates and staff at the Head Office. The daily itinerary of all delegates should always be known at the Head Office.
4. There must be the possibility of 24/7 communications with the Head Office. The availability at all time of double systems (e.g. landline and mobile) must be ensured. The Security Plan should indicate the communications equipment to be taken by the delegates.
5. Each delegate and the relevant staff at the Head Office (including the security back up staff and relevant managers) must carry a list of phone numbers for emergency contact both at the Head Office and in the field. Also carry with you numbers of key officials who may be able to help if in need.

### **Health arrangements**

Your organisation must be satisfied that all designated delegates are fully fit and reasonably protected prior to undertaking a mission.

1. Designated delegates should ensure that they are fully fit to undertake the mission. They must declare any pre-existing medical conditions which may affect their health during the mission prior to travel (including asthma, diabetes, or serious allergies). They should be able to carry with them or find at destination all relevant medication. Designated delegates may not be allowed to travel if approvers are not satisfied about their health conditions.
2. Designated delegates must fulfil international vaccination requirements prior to travel. Copies of their immunization records will be kept at the Head Office.
3. Contingency plans for dealing with serious health incidents must be drawn up.
4. In situations of no or inadequate health services Head Office must ensure that there is coverage by agreements with recognized medical services.

### **Emergency evacuation**

Where relevant, the Security Plan must indicate the arrangements for emergency evacuation of the delegation, including the arrangements made with those who will carry out the evacuation, for example the UN, other IGOs, partner NGOs or others.

### **Equipment**

All mission delegations must be provided with suitable and sufficient equipment to carry out the work of the mission safely and securely. In advance, they need to be trained in their use and take

### **Training and relevant experience**

Your organisation is responsible to provide suitable, sufficient and regular training to all personnel engaged in official travel on behalf on the company.



## Money

Based on the mission requirements delegates will be provided with travellers' cheques, cash or both. You need to think carefully about the safe transport and keeping of large quantities of money, if this cannot be avoided.

## Language and interpreters

Except in exceptional circumstances, delegations must always be able to operate in the country's language, therefore delegations must include at least one member who speaks the relevant language(s) or provision must be made to ensure the use of interpreters.

Interpreters must be trusted and reliable. They can be hired locally and as such need not be formally HR NGO delegates. Proper contractual agreements must be concluded with all locally hired interpreters.

## Notification to the authorities

A proper mission policy is to ensure that the authorities of the visited area cannot in any way challenge the good faith of the organisation and the openness of its operations

This requirement is aimed at enhancing the security of the delegates. Once they have allowed in the delegations, government officials can then be expected not to hamper the work of the delegates and to respect the organisation's modes of operation (in particular the need to protect the confidentiality of contacts and information).

1. Inform the authorities in writing of the mission in all cases where the political situation is sensitive.
2. Delegates must carry with them accreditation letters on official letterhead confirming their status as delegates. It is always opportune to carry copies of other official correspondence to the authorities informing them of the mission to show at the port of entry or elsewhere.

## What you should leave behind

The relevant documentation of the mission (e.g. Mission Proposal, Security Plan, etc) must remain available at all times with the relevant sub-regional team. In addition, each delegate should leave behind:

- Copies of the passport, including of the pages with relevant visas
- Copies of relevant medical certificates
- Information about their blood group and any special medical conditions or requirement that ought to be made known in case of accident
- Copy of the driving licence if intending to drive during the travel
- Next of kin information



Willy Mukendi responding to participants' questions in a discussion  
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The following are rules as well as advice for all delegates and anyone else who may be accompanying them (e.g. hired drivers) to follow in order to maximize the chances of achieving the objectives of the travel and minimize the risks. Remember that it is always far better to avoid getting into trouble rather than figuring out how to extricate yourself from trouble.

Please bear in mind that security guidelines, no matter how detailed, cannot replace common sense. Also, they will help enhancing everyone's security if all delegates act in a responsible and professional manner.

The Head of Delegation must seek prior approval from the Head of the Office for any proposed substantial change of the scope of the mission, and its itinerary and duration.

Non-compliance with these rules and advice may be grounds for the immediate removal of a delegate from the delegation and their return home. Depending on the gravity of the non-compliance, further measures may need to be undertaken (for example, if the non-compliance amounted to gross misconduct). Unless exceptional circumstances require otherwise, the decision to remove a delegate from the delegation should be taken by the Head of the Office following advice by other managers as appropriate.

Delegates must bear in mind that for the whole duration of the mission they represent, and will be seen as representing, his/her organisation as a whole. Your conduct must be exemplary at all times while on mission [DISCUSS]. In this respect you are representing your organisation at all times, including when taking a break, especially during prolonged missions. By appearing confident about your work and sensitive to the political, social and cultural environment you operate in, you will increase your security and contribute to a favorable image for your organisation.

1. Delegates shall at all times conduct themselves with the dignity and discretion appropriate to their role as representative of their organisation.
2. Delegates have a duty of care and personal responsibility for their own safety and security as well as that of their colleagues and any others involved in the mission.
3. All delegates must be accountable to the HoD throughout the mission period and follow his or her instructions.
4. Local drivers and local interpreters, while normally would not be formal delegates, must be treated as any other delegate with regard to any security and safety issue.

## Contingency plan

Although this contingency plan focuses on possible security incidents during fact-finding/investigation or research missions and travels, the principle is not limited to these circumstances. It can be applied to security situations at workplaces, homes etc...

Contingency plans usually include tips and information such as: when to hibernate (keepcover), where to relocate or evacuate (what this means and what it entails); having clearly mapped routes out to safer places; back-up resources; information management (security); security of offices; security of data; how to carry out simple counter-intelligence; how to survive an ambush; how to survive kidnapping; how to survive rape etc...

In general, be aware that statistically security incidents are significantly more likely to happen after dark, and a large percentage are related to traffic accidents.

- At the point of entry and exit, and throughout the travel, you must not behave in such a manner which might be construed as clandestine, or be interpreted as conducting covert operations under any circumstances.
- You must maintain confidentiality with respect to all information gathered during the mission and shall undertake not to disclose it unless agreed by the HoD.
- You must obey the laws of the country, including on drinking, driving, and possession and use of drugs, and follow local customs where is necessary to avoid offence and does not contradict your organisation's core values. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is strictly prohibited.
- You must normally comply with any specific instructions from the authorities. In circumstances where there is a clear conflict between instructions from the authorities and your organisation's values, you should be prepared not to follow these instructions, except in circumstances where this may jeopardise your personal safety and security or that of colleagues or contacts. Your organisation should be consulted as soon as possible about how best to follow-up on similar incidents.
- Always carry with you your passport or other identification document and your accreditation letter or relevant official correspondence. It is also useful to carry business cards of relevant officials.
- Never take physical risks in defence of property or money.
- When walking out, only carry the cash and document you might need on that particular outing unless there is not safer place to leave your money.
- Walk closer to the curb and avoid badly lit or poorly frequented roads.
- Beware of drivers asking for instructions or to look at maps – they may be trying to distract you to attack you.
- Do not accept or give money or any other form of material inducement which might be considered as a bribe. However, local customs on tipping or other expected payments to secure essential services should be taken into account.
- Accept only gifts that are reasonable in the overall cultural context and that of the mission, and as long as they cannot reasonably be construed as bribes. All gifts should be recorded in the mission report and belong to your organisation. You may keep those of modest value.
- Be prepared to give token gifts where it may be socially expected of you.
- If in doubt about drinks or food offered to you (they may try to drug you) make up an excuse for not drinking or eating, for example claim to have an allergy.
- Delegates in delegations of two or more should avoid separating if there are security risks. If they separate, good communications among them must be ensured at all times.
- You must follow local regulations and customs concerning photography of people, objects or events. In any event, whenever possible you should seek prior permission from those to be photographed or filmed. If possible also seek permission to use such material.
- Always assume that taking pictures of military objectives or taking any pictures in a military zone is not allowed, unless you can establish otherwise and believe you can overcome a challenge on the spot without putting yourself at risk.
- Do not initiate contacts with delegations of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the country unless this has been otherwise agreed (usually this would have been done through discussions between headquarters or at a higher level). In all cases you must be aware of and respect the confidentiality constraints applying to ICRC delegations.

- You must not use armed guards unless they are absolutely necessary for protection against criminality, are not military, and the practice is common in the country. If this eventuality had not been foreseen before departure and recorded in the Security Plan, the HoD must check with the relevant responsible and the Head of the Office must approve such use of armed guards.

A relevant contingency plan should take into account many more aspects than can be mentioned here such as accommodation, local travel, health and communication. Important is the existence of a plan that takes into account all possible harmful events from various directions and provides guidelines of conduct and solutions.

## Summary

Before engaging in fact-finding work and on-site investigations in situations of conflict, you should be very careful about your own safety and security. Don't take risks and don't go unless you can give clear, positive answers to the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the visit?
- Do you have the expertise to evaluate any material evidence?
- Will there be witnesses who are prepared to talk to you?
- How can you guarantee your own security and that of witnesses?

For any fact-finding work or on-site investigation you will have to consider who should take part. You will need to balance a number of different factors:

- Expertise – you need investigators who know something about the issue being researched.
- Respectability – you need people with a good reputation who will be taken seriously.
- Sometimes this will mean having someone older in your team.
- Balance – you will always need at least one woman in the team. You will also need to consider the balance of other issues, such as ethnicity.
- Security – of yourselves and the people you meet – will often be a key consideration.
- Communication – with each other and with your home base – is a key factor. You will also need to decide whether openness or secrecy will be a better guarantee of your security.

Under no circumstances carry guns. They do not make you more secure – the opposite, usually – and they send the wrong message about you and your organisation.

All HRDs should be aware of the saying: *“Don't know then don't go”*.

## Group work

The facilitator provided opportunity for group work during and after his presentation. Once participants were asked to do a brief assessment of major threats they face in their



Participants studying their handouts for a group work session  
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current work setting and rate their probability and impact on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 high, 1 low).

A second exercise required participants to draft a detailed risk assessment for one of the following scenarios: 1) Going to Kotido to do investigation on child trafficking and 2) Visiting a camp for internally displaced persons. To facilitate the exercise, the facilitator provided a template outlining the main points to be considered in the risk assessment that would later on be the basis of a security plan.

The presentation was followed by a lively discussion among participants and the realisation of the importance to pay more attention to security management on personal and organisation level.

## **Day 3**

The third and last day of the workshop covered a topic essential for working in areas of armed conflict, i.e. how to cope with trauma as a defenders and how to successfully engage in counselling and rehabilitation

### **Anjoleta Otto, Caritas Counselling Centre**

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#### **Coping with trauma; counselling and rehabilitation measure**

Before we deal with coping strategies with trauma, it is important to fully understand what trauma is, how it originated, possible causes, signs to show that someone is traumatized and how to manage a traumatized person. Management strategies will then include issues of counselling and rehabilitation measures.

#### **Definitions**

Trauma is a mental state of extreme shock caused by a severe, sudden, terrifying and difficult life situation. This relates to what a person has seen, heard, touched, smelt, tasted and experienced. The more the human senses are involved in the experience, the more severe the victim's traumatic reactions appear. Trauma is an unpleasant experience that makes one feel upset, depressed and /or anxious. Trauma is a normal reaction to an abnormal life situation.

#### **Common causes of trauma**

Man-made causes consist of things whose origins are human such as wars, rape/defilement, fire outbreak, road accidents, killing/murder, burglary, robbery, physical assault, abortion, physical

deformity due to catastrophic accidents, serious terminal illness such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, stroke, etc.

Natural Disasters include natural happenings such as earth quakes, volcanic eruption, storms, drought, famine, floods, etc.

### **Signs and symptoms**

Signs and Symptoms of Trauma include but not limited to the following: Flashbacks, deliberate avoidance of similar situations, people, places, pictures, thoughts or feelings that remind them of such traumatic experiences, anxiety, isolation, numbness, insomnia (lack of sleep), hyper vigilance (extreme alertness), lack of concentration, hallucination, nervousness, crying easily, difficulty in trusting anyone, aggression, apathy (indifference to what is going on), increased involvement in risky behaviours such as over drinking, driving too fast, regression (going back to less mature behaviours), repression, etc.

### **Management Strategies**

In trauma management, the helper must begin by talking to the client. It is a psychotherapy (talking treatment); debriefing (ventilating by talking through the traumatic experience), encourage the traumatized person to live with others not in isolation. He/she should avoid idleness and do physical exercises. Encourage the traumatised person to attend to professional counselling in a situation where the helper feels he is not competent enough or when the victim is not responding well enough towards healing from the traumatic experience.

Counselling is a process, a relationship and an interaction between client and a counsellor with the aim of bringing about change of attitude, behaviour, thinking and feeling. It is a dialogue whose aim is to let the client listen more attentively to himself, take responsibility and make decisions that can bring about improvement to his life situation.

### **Procedure/ Guidelines for Counselling a traumatized person**

- Welcoming: Traumatized people are wounded in their trust towards other people. So a trustful relationship with the counsellor (helper) has to be established first. Appreciate the courage that it takes to talk about the wounds of the heart. It means a lot if the person comes to you to share. Encourage the person to take time. Do not rush and do not intimidate with questions. There are difficult moments which clients are not yet ready to share. Do not force them but allow them to share only the things that they are ready to share now. Others will be shared with time.
- Acknowledging strong feelings: It may be that somebody who underwent painful moments starts crying. Stay with the person, empathize and accept the feelings as normal. Let your client not go before you are sure that the feelings are stable again. Close your session with encouragement and hope.

- Explain that his/her problems are shared by many people. And encourage positive coping behaviour. When your client talks about problems of trauma (e.g. nightmares, sleeping problems, etc), explain that all this is normal and most of the problems can pass with time if they learn how to cope with them. Examples of coping strategies include the following: Sports activities against sleeping difficulties, seeking social support by being with friends, family members against fear, isolation, anxiety and depression; daily routine (regular sleeping and eating habits, worship and spiritual activities).
- Explain to the family members about the problems of a traumatized family member: By accepting a traumatized family member as he/she is, by giving special patience and encouragement, a family can help a lot to stabilize him/her.
- When moments of despair come and your client talks about killing himself/herself, look for the positive things in their life. Ask them what gives him/her hope to continue? What are the positive things in their life that give strength and energy?
- As a counsellor (helper), be sensitive to your own feelings and accept limits. To counsel people who have undergone traumatic experiences is very demanding. To be part of the suffering they are going through might remind you of your own problems and suffering. Listening to too much traumatic stories can make the counsellor develop secondary trauma. Do not go beyond your own limits. Refer to others who can handle them and identify ways of dealing with your secondary trauma or burn out.

Traditional ways of trauma healing should be encouraged if the clients believe that they will facilitate their recovery from trauma and increase psychological wellbeing.

### Reparation and Rehabilitation Measures

During war periods all over the world majority of people in the affected war areas are denied their fundamental rights, including the right to vote and the right to access appropriate education, adequate housing, accessible health care and proper sanitation. Those who oppose the status quo are subjected to various forms of repression. Many organizations and individuals in opposition to the state are usually banned and banished, protest marches are usually dispersed, freedom of speech is curtailed, and thousands are detained and imprisoned. This gives rise to tremendous frustration and anger amongst the disenfranchised. Soon, each act of repression by the state gives rise to a reciprocal act of resistance, resulting in horrific acts of violence and human rights abuses on all sides of the conflict. As experience of wars show, no section of society escapes these acts and abuses and the most affected members of the society are usually women and children.



Anjoleta Otto during her presentation  
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Reparation is defined as “any form of compensation, *ex gratia* payment, restitution, rehabilitation or recognition” to persons whose rights have been violated.

Victims of human rights abuses have suffered a multiplicity of losses and therefore have the right to reparation. Without adequate reparation and rehabilitation measures, there can be no healing or reconciliation. These are some of the measures to be taken in order to grant reparation to victims of gross human rights violations to restore the physical and mental well being of victims:

#### **Individual rehabilitation measures**

- Urgent Interim Reparation is assistance for people in urgent need, to provide them with access to appropriate services and facilities.
- Symbolic reparation encompasses measures to facilitate the communal process of remembering and commemorating the pain and victories of the past. A simple example of this is the Attiak massacre where hundreds of people perished. A yearly commemoration of such event can be a measure to facilitate rehabilitation, a healing episode where survivors are given opportunity to express their stories and feelings. Amongst other measures, symbolic reparation should entail identifying a national day of remembrance and reconciliation, erection of memorials and monuments, and the development of museums.
- Legal and administrative measures will also be proposed to assist individuals to obtain death certificates, expedite outstanding legal matters and expunge criminal records.

#### **Community Rehabilitation Measures**

Entire communities suffer the adverse effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, expressed by a wide range of deponents to the Commission. It is therefore recommended that rehabilitation programmes be established both at community and national levels.

Rehabilitation programmes should form part of a general initiative to transform the way in which services are provided in the community. Such programmes can also promote reconciliation within communities. For community rehabilitation programmes to have the desired positive effect and to be sustainable, relevant government ministries should facilitate their development, in consultation with other partners like representatives of organised businesses, victim support groups, NGOs, faith communities and so on.

- Community rehabilitation programmes: There should be community-based services and activities, aimed at promoting the healing and recovery of individuals and communities that have been affected by human rights violations. A number of victims can be referred to the relevant government departments for assistance. This will give the victims a feeling that they are understood and cared for. The institutional reform which refers to legal, administrative and institutional measures are designed to prevent the recurrence of human rights abuses.
- Community-based interventions: Self-sustaining, community-based survivor support groups can be established, staffed by trained facilitators from the community. This method of support and treatment is not a unique concept and enjoys success where facilitators focus on therapy.



- Skills training: Community members should be trained in a variety of skills to enable them to assist victims of human rights abuses. These should include crisis management, critical incident briefing, trauma awareness training, referral skills and knowledge of available resources.
- Specialised trauma counselling services: Specialized emotional trauma counselling services should be established. A national or regional strategy to train trauma counsellors should be developed so that a capacity is built to combat the war of trauma now that the war of the gun is subsiding.
- Compensation measures: A survey can be administered to collect information from victims and survivors, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations (CBOs), faith communities and academic institutions. Consultative workshops can be held throughout the areas of insurgencies.
- Demilitarization Programme: This should be systematic and assist in demilitarising youth, who have for decades been involved in violent activity to effect political change. The programme should consist of a combination of social, therapeutic and political processes and interventions, appropriate to the area in which they are being implemented.
- Rehabilitation for perpetrators and their families: Perpetrators and their families need to be reintegrated into normal community life. This is essential to create a society in which human rights abuses will not recur. Individual and family rehabilitative systems need to be instituted to assist individuals and families in coming to terms with their violent past and learning constructive and peaceful ways of resolving conflict without resort to violence.
- Mental health services: Prevailing negative perceptions of therapy and its practice prevent people from accessing mental health services. Individuals and communities should be educated about the link between mental health and conflicts of the past. Appropriate mental health initiatives should be linked with developmental projects. Mental health cannot be seen in isolation from socio-economic development. Victims and survivors of gross human rights violations have complex physical and emotional needs which can be most appropriately addressed by multi-disciplinary teams
- Family-based therapy: The impact of gross human rights violations on the family is often underestimated. To address this issue, training programmes for health care workers, counsellors, and social worker aimed at improving their skills in the family systems approach be instituted by the relevant ministries/bodies.

### Educational Measures

Education is ripe for reform and the possibilities for its transformation are exciting. However, one of the effects of the past is that it has resulted in a strong culture of often pointless conflict around education matters. The desire to learn in a disciplined environment is important so that the society is informed about situations around.

It is important to establish community schools and youth centres as a priority to facilitate the re-integration of affected youth into society. Specific



Participants listening attentively to Ms. Otto's presentation © EHAHRDP

accelerated adult basic education and training (ABET) programme can be established to meet the needs of youth and adults who are semi-literate and have lost educational opportunities due to human rights abuses.

Rebuilding of demolished schools, particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas should be prioritized. Through Special educational support services, remedial and emotional support should be included in mainstream educational programmes. Mainstream educational facilities should provide skills based training courses in order to respond to the needs of mature students and to help them find employment.

The presentation was well perceived by all participants also due to the facilitator's ability to provide case studies and describe situations in a demonstrative manner. During and after the presentation, participants had a chance to ask questions, clarify points and narrate their own experience in counselling victims of human rights violations. The facilitator stressed the importance of defenders to be aware of the emotional stress that is involved in their human rights work and the counselling of people. She emphasized the need for defenders to be sensitive of their own emotional and psychological state to be able to act professionally and provide best possible assistance to victims of abuse.



Hassan Shire Sheikh handing over certificates of attendance to the participants © EHAHRDP

After the discussion, participants were given an opportunity for feedback on the entire workshop, i.e. its coordination and content. The majority of participants made an input declaring the value of this exercise for their daily work but stressing the need for further such trainings in remote and conflict affected areas. They also reiterated their wish to be involved in further activities carried out by EHAHRDP and stressed their determination to contribute to the efforts of the Network in improving the protection of HRDs by joining in campaigns and lobbying decision makers.

The workshop was then officially closed by handing over certificates of attendance to the participants. In his closing remarks, Hassan Shire Sheikh thanked the participants for their active participation in the workshop sessions and discussions and stressed EHAHRDP's commitment to further support defenders in the region. He urged participants to be aware of their rights, utilize the existing mechanisms of protection for defenders and join EHAHRDP in the struggle for more visibility, better protection and higher efficiency of defenders.

### 3 Evaluation

Participants completed an evaluation form on the final day of the workshop assessing the content, facilitation and coordination of the workshop. With regard to content, the majority of participants commended the relevance of the topics addressed since they addressed the kind of situations they live in. Several participants emphasised the need for an extended training on risk assessment and security measures owing to the fact that all of them work in areas of conflict. The facilitation by the resource persons was also ranked positively. General comments related to the appreciation of the fact that each participant was given an opportunity to participate during the workshop. However, the coordination of the conference was ranked lowest with most participants not happy about the services offered at the hotel especially the meals and accommodation. It was recommended that the coordination team visits the venue before hand to check out on facilities offered.

In relation to the objectives of the conference, a positive conclusion can be drawn. Participants were sensitised on the concept of human rights defenders, their rights and how to handle challenges that are often attached to their courageous work especially in the areas of conflict.

### 4 Conclusion

It can be said that the objectives of the Workshop were achieved. Participants, many of whom had no knowledge about the existence of the various regional and international mechanisms, received relevant information and resources through this workshop. As part of the material provided to the participants, they received vital references assisting them in broadening their knowledge about their own protection. Several participants clearly stated that the newly gained awareness on the concept of human rights defenders and rights and duties enshrined in the UN Declaration provided them with encouragement to continue their human rights work knowing about the avenues available for protection and redress of injustice. Having learnt about the work of EHAHRDP furthermore encouraged them to continue their struggle in respect for human rights due to a protector being in reach and available to advise on further steps.

EHAHRDP itself benefited immensely from the participants' expertise and their various organizational backgrounds clearly depicting the wide range of human rights work and the specific challenges faced in different work settings (see brief profiles of organizations below). The participants' contributions to the discussion were keenly noted by EHAHRDP and will inform future programme planning to enhance the relevance of the organisation's work for HRDs on the ground.

In line with the objectives restated above, EHAHRDP considers this workshop to have achieved its objectives. Future similar activities will be planned in light of the lessons

learnt during this event having proven the importance to take knowledge to the grassroots of human rights defense and thereby strengthening defenders' potential to carry out their work.

## Annex 1: Agenda

### *MONDAY, June 25, 2007*

8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration
9:00 am – 10:30 am	Welcoming Remarks
	<b>Keynote Speech:</b> The Human rights situation in conflict affected areas Hon Norbert Mao-Chairman Gulu District
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Morning Break
11:00 am - 1:00 pm	<b>Challenges of HRDs in Northern and Eastern Uganda</b> Participants' testimonies and contributions
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch Break
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	<b>International and Regional Protection Mechanisms for Human Rights Defenders</b> Hassan Shire Sheikh – Chairperson EHAHRDP
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	<b>Discussion on the use of International and Regional Protection Mechanisms</b>
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Afternoon Break
4:00 pm – 4:30 pm	<b>Shadow Reporting to the UN and African Commission</b> Hassan Shire Sheikh – Chairperson EHAHRDP
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm	<b>Discussion on Shadow Reporting to the UN and African Commission</b>

### *TUESDAY, June 26, 2007*

9:00 am – 09:30 am	<b>Advocacy, campaigning and networking: How to mobilize support for protection in situations of conflict</b> Mr. Christian Mukosa- Amnesty International
9:30 am – 10:30 am	<b>Workshops on Advocacy, campaigning and networking</b>
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Morning Break
11:00 am - 1:00 pm	<b>Plenary Session: Workshop Reports &amp; Discussion</b>
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch Break

2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	<b>Risk Assessment and Security Management for HRDs in areas of conflict</b> Mr. Willy Mukendi- Amnesty International
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	<b>Workshops on Risk Assessment and Security Management for HRDs in Areas of Conflict</b>
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Afternoon Break
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Plenary Session: Workshop Reports
5:00 pm – 5:30 pm	Wrap up and Lessons learned
7:00 pm	Dinner

**WEDNESDAY, June 27, 2007**

9:00 am – 09:30 am	<b>Coping with Trauma, Counselling and Rehabilitation Measures</b> – Caritas Counselling Centre
9:30 am – 10:30 am	<b>Workshop on Trauma, Counselling and Rehabilitation Measures</b>
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Morning Break
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Plenary Session: Workshop Reports & Discussion
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm	Closing Remarks
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch and Departure

## Annex 2: List of participants

Name	Organisation	Position
<b>GULU</b>		
Francis Odongyoo	Human Rights Focus (HURIFO)	Research & Advocacy Officer
Giovanna Lamunu	Legal Aid Project	Programme Officer
Oroma Gladys	The Daily Monitor	Reporter
Dennies Ojwee	New Vision	Reporter
John Opio	Choice FM	Reporter
Alex Odongo	Rupiny	Reporter

<b>KITGUM</b>		
Kidega Richard	Justice and Peace Commission	Programme Officer
Devota Nuwe	Civil Military Cooperation Centre	UN Volunteer/Human Rights Field Officer
Lucy Otto	Local Council	Senior Probation Officer
Ochola O. Dominic	Northern Broadcast Corporation/ Radio King	Reporter
<b>SOROTI</b>		
Janet Rose Agayo	Rural Orphan Self Health Care Org.	Manager
Tino Rebecca	UHRC	Human Rights Officer
Kiyai Susan	Action Against Child Abuse and Neglect	Field Officer
<b>KATAKWI</b>		
Walter Elakas	Katakwi Urafiki Foundation	Programme Officer
<b>AMURIA</b>		
Tom Okello	Obalanga Human Rights and Health Care	Programme Coordinator
<b>MOROTO</b>		
Otim Paul	UHRC	Human Rights Officer (Investigations)
<b>KAABONG</b>		
Emmanuel Lopeyok	Civil Military Cooperation Centre	Human Rights Volunteer
<b>LIRA</b>		
Akullo Hadrine Flavia	Development and Training Research Centre (DETREC)	Human Rights Officer/GBV
Joyce Opon	Lira Women Initiative	Coordinator

## Annex 3: List of Resource Persons

Name	Organisation	Position
Christian Mukosa	Amnesty International	Campaigner, Central Africa
Willy Mukendi	Amnesty International	Refugee Assistant
Hassan Shire Sheikh	Executive Director	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
Anjoleta Otto	Caritas Counselling Centre	Councillor

## Annex 4: List of Coordination Team

Name	Organisation	Position
Hassan Shire Sheikh	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network	Executive Director
Nora Rehmer	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network	Programme Officer
Tumusiime Kabwende Deo	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network	Press Officer
Caroline Magambo	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network	Volunteer

## Annex 3: Organisation profiles

### Action Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ACCAN); Soroti

ACCAN is a non-governmental child focused organisation based in Teso sub-region. It was established in 1992 as a result of political insurgency and cattle rustling by the Karamojong warriors. This left many women and children more vulnerable and their rights grossly abused. One of the major activities of the centre is to establish community based support structures i.e.

- Child support committees
- Child rights advocacy groups
- Child rights clubs

- Community based child rights monitors

The main challenge faced are hostility from the community accusing the organisation of 'spoiling' their children. Also, promoting child rights in a poverty stricken community is also hard because people's attitudes tend to be negative.

### **Civil Military Cooperation Centre; Kaabong, Kitgum**

Civil Military Cooperation Centre is an initiative by the UHRC and the People's Defence Force (UPDF) to enhance civil-military cooperation in the war torn Acholi sub-region and Lango sub-region for the purpose of human rights and freedom, peace and reconciliation. The centres are opened with the conviction that attaining enduring peaceful co-existence in the sub-region requires the co-operation and efforts of all stake holders and removal of barriers and mistrust. Activities of CMCC include;

- To mediate and organise reconciliation meetings between the civilian and the military whenever a conflict has been reported in certain IDPs camps.
- To sensitise and create awareness about observance of basic human rights through radio programmes and outreach programmes in IDPs camps.
- To receive and register complaints of human rights violations and refers to relevant institutions.
- To assist in timely investigation of human rights violations in their area of operation and make accurate reports.
- To compile regular reports on human rights situations in the district and submit to institution of representation.

The challenges faced by the organisation include inability to reach some of the places where human rights violations are taking place due to insecurity in some of these areas; a lot of misconception about people's rights and justice; many times the staff are perceived as being biased towards civilian issues but not addressing the violations faced by the army/police; the military institution and police do not release classified information to the organization and yet the information could help during investigations; facilitation of their activities especially transport are very difficult and name calling such as 'human wrong' and threats from the soldiers are also very common.

### **District Local Government; Kitgum**

The Probation Officer is charged with the duty of defending the rights of the youth and children in the district; carrying out community sensitisation about children's rights; family reconciliation; counselling and prosecution of the violators.

The biggest challenge faced is that cases related to the army are difficult to handle as officers are often threatened with calls and messages in addition to using her gender to ridiculing her; child trafficking which goes beyond the borders makes it difficult to handle in terms of transport and



administration; lack of concrete evidence of case as perpetrators are some times concealed by the community; betrayal by parents and relatives of children who would otherwise be principal witnesses in court after a case has been reported.

### **Development Training and Research Centre (DETREC); Soroti**

The vision of DETREC is a society in which people are able to take their destiny in their own hands. It means people should be able to participate in the processes that affect their lives. The mission of DETREC is commitment to service for the disadvantaged communities in North and North-Eastern Uganda through participatory capacity building and support. DETREC's Core Programme Activities for CBO's and Local Government in Lira, Amolatar and Apac Districts are based on **four components**:

- Management & Agricultural production Skill (MAPS)
- Human Rights
- Conflict Management and Peace Building
- Civil Society Organization (CSO) Strengthening

However, activities are hindered by the fact that mobilization is difficult because to most people content is secondary and financial or material facilitation is more important; the community's support is sometimes hard to win because people think issues of rights violations are police issues; and men also complain about the fact that only women are trained and empowered.

### **Human Rights Focus; Gulu**

Human Rights Focus (HURIFO) was founded in 1994 as a local initiative to address the rampant human rights violations in Northern Uganda. HURIFO aims at contributing to the establishment of mechanisms that enhance awareness and respect of human rights, through strategically designed programmes and projects. Other aims include assisting the needy victims of human rights violation to defend their rights through lawful means as well as networking to achieve the organisation's mission. Activities include:

- Paralegal training
- Human rights monitoring, documentation, research and investigation
- Litigation
- Information, counselling and legal assistance

The challenges faced by the organisation are when violations are done by state agents, authorities restrict the staff and concoct charges against them. For staff it is traumatising to listen to the victim's stories and even take some pictures. Also threats from security agents and name calling have occurred.

### **Justice and Peace Commission; Kitgum**

The Justice and Peace Commission of Gulu Archdiocese is an arm of the Catholic Church established with a vision to create a just and peaceful society and to promote human rights and human dignity for all. It was established in 1993 but became operational in 2001 covering the whole of Acholi sub-region; with its offices in Gulu, Kitgum and in Kalongo in Pader.

Justice and Peace Commission conducts regular community sensitizations on topical human rights issues; household education (door-to-door delivery of human rights education); provision of basic (para) legal first aid to members of the community whose rights have been abused; counselling, mediation between parties in conflict as well as receiving and handling minor cases and referring those that involve some technicality to the relevant authorities / institutions; monitoring and reporting on cases of human rights abuses and violations for purposes of advocacy.

The Commission's work is hindered by security/ government agencies issuing treats to the staff after a human rights violation has been exposed. The community sometimes also poses a big challenge when the provisions of the law seem to be running parallel to their customs and norms. They want justice their own way; some times the community rejects efforts if they don't see them as effective;

### **Legal Aid Project, Uganda Law Society; Gulu**

The Legal Aid Project (LAP) was established by the Uganda Law Society in 1992 to provide legal assistance to indigent and vulnerable people in Uganda. The Project was born out of the realization that apart from the state brief system that handles only capital offences, and the huge backlog of cases, there is no statutory free Legal Aid provision in Uganda despite the fact that a large part of Uganda's population lives below the poverty line, and without means to access justice. The programmes carried out by the project include;

- Provision of legal Information and advice
- Mediation, negotiation and other alternative dispute resolution services
- Court Representation
- Training paralegals in areas where there is limited supply of Advocates
- Conducting legal and Human rights awareness programs
- Production of human and legal Rights publication materials
- Lobbying and advocacy for pro-poor laws
- Research documentation and dissemination.

The project is also attached to IDP programmes in addition to the stated activities. Challenges that are faced include; intimidation and harassment by police and army officers; restriction of access to certain places; when soldiers commit a crime they are transferred instead of being taken to court; many times perpetrators buy their way out of prison and absence of a high court in Gulu makes procedural aspects difficult. On a personal level, threatening calls are received from the army; people are disappointed when the outcome of the court cases is not clear.

### **Lira Women Peace Initiative; Lira**

Lira Women Peace Initiative is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) started as a result of the 20 years conflict in Northern Uganda which left many people displaced. Displacement and its social-economic effects have lead to many women /girls being raped, forced into marriages, abducted or carrying on responsibilities of men who were either killed or run away for safety. The objectives of the organisation include;

- To increase awareness of the rights of women and children as a foundation for peace and development.
- To empower women to advocate for their rights and or children.
- To offer life skills and income generating skills, training women groups and children to enhance self-reliance and to avoid over dependence.
- To collect and disseminate information on priority program geared towards economic emancipation of women.

Challenges faced by the organisation to carry out its work include;

- Lack of transport and funds to facilitate movement and activities in the camps.
- Poor methods of communication and storage of data collected due to lack of computers
- Poor commitment of members due to lack of incentives.

### **Obalanga Human Rights and Health Care; Amuria**

The organisation was founded in 1998 and addresses health and human rights issues. It was originally founded in response to the multitude of cases of elephantiasis and high grow cells without active Government intervention. A research by the Ministry of Health showed an infection rate of 30% among the local population. The organisation's works is to assist people in managing their permanent disability caused by elephantiasis.

In its human rights work, the organisation documents violations and monitors the observance of human rights. The displacement caused by the insurgence of the Lord Resistance Army led to human rights violations both by the rebels and the Government troops. Investigations into atrocities committed by Government proved difficult with many obstacles provided by authorities.

One key activity carried out by the organisation was collecting the bones of those who had died in the bush and had hindered people to return to their homes out of fear from the unburied dead. Together with the community, the remains of the victims were buried decently. However, the exercise was aborted due to hindrance by the military and Government authorities.

Besides financial and technical challenges, the organisation and in particular its Chairman have received various threats from the military, district officials and some members of the public in response to their human rights work.

### **Rural Orphans Self Help Care Organisation (ROSHCO); Soroti**

ROSHCO is a local initiative founded in 1995. The project beneficiaries are mainly orphans, destitute children, both in and out of school especially girls and women. The organisation's core objectives are;

- To build relationship with the orphans' families to be able to assess the orphans real needs & problems.
- To improve the food security in orphans' families by group formation.
- To meet orphans, spiritual, social, mental emotional and physical needs e.g. food, clothing, education and shelter.

In trying to achieve these objectives, many challenges are encountered. many times, one is accused of "spoiling" the children and women when they get to know their rights and can stand up for them; children are used as a source of cheap labour; increase in child trafficking is noted; women are not allowed to attend workshops on rights education; hostility from the community members which includes sending threatening messages to the ROSHCO staff.

### **Uganda Human Rights Commission; Soroti, Moroto**

The Uganda Human Rights Commission was established under the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. The decision to establish a permanent body to monitor the human rights situations in the country was in recognition of Uganda's violent and turbulent history. The activities carried out include;

- Receiving complaints of human rights violations by either the complainants themselves going to the UHRC offices, or the Commission initiates the investigation.
- Conducting investigations on the complaints received.
- Carrying out mediations on the complaints received
- Monitoring the Internally Displaced People's camps
- Inspection of detention places
- Sensitization of the public about human rights through radios, workshops and writing magazines.
- Conducting tribunal hearings.

One of the main challenges that the Commission faces is that it is considered to be interfering in the work of the UPDF and police by protecting criminals especially in torture cases by the UPDF and police. The Commission also lacks the capacity to reach out to the entire area due to limited facilities. There is also the problem of non-compliance by government mostly in tribunal cases where when compensation is awarded, government takes too long to provide compensation and in the end UHRC is looked at as not effective or "eating" the compensation money themselves.; UHRC carries out monitoring of detention facilities however when reports are produced they are not acted upon and as a result the Commission is considered to be ineffective.