



Justice &  
Reconciliation  
Project

2010  
Annual  
Report





# **2010 Annual Report**

*Front cover: A child stands in front of a return site near Padibe in Lamwo district. Nearly all of the displaced persons in northern Uganda have left the camps and are resettling in their ancestral homesteads. Photo Credit: Lara Rosenoff.*

## **ABOUT**

The Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) has played a key role in transitional justice (TJ) in Uganda since 2005 through seeking to understand and explain the interests, needs, concerns and views of the communities affected by the LRA conflict. JRP promotes locally sensitive and sustainable peace in Africa's Great Lakes region by focusing on the active involvement of grassroots communities in local-level transitional justice.

## **VISION**

The Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) will pioneer new understandings of how transitional justice can be designed and implemented at a local level to maximise its impact in terms of reconciliation, peace-building and accountability.

## **MISSION**

To empower conflict affected communities by preserving memory, acknowledging loss, and promoting healing through participatory research, capacity building, advocacy and documentation.

## **MOTTO**

Working for justice and reconciliation with grassroots communities.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To document the experiences of communities related to war;
- To advocate on behalf of conflict-affected communities;
- To build the capacity of communities to undertake documentation and advocacy;
- To conduct research on local-level transitional justice issues crucial to emerging national debates and policies;
- To create a centre of excellence in relation to local-level transitional justice.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

January 13, 2011

The year 2010 presented a significant step in the future of JRP following the transition from a project created in 2004 to an independent NGO with headquarters in Gulu. JRP has a national mandate to carry out transitional justice activities in Uganda. During the past year, the staff at JRP -- together with our student interns, community volunteers, local victim groups and partners -- made significant contributions towards the success of planned programs for the year. In particular, working in over twenty local communities in north, northeastern and West Nile regions presented us with unique insights into war-affected communities' quests for justice, reconciliation and sustainable peace in Uganda.

Our engagements in mobilizing civil society across Acholi, Lango, Teso and West Nile sub-regions for meaningful participation in discourses on justice and reconciliation provided an opportunity for us to re-echo our commitment of ensuring that victims should be at the centre of every stage of developing any transitional justice process in Uganda.

Some key areas of our engagements in the past year include empowering victims to articulate their own positions on transitional justice, for instance the *'Women's Gender Justice Statement,'* which was circulated to policy-makers and to a wider audience nationally and internationally. We also mainstreamed gender-related concerns affecting young, formerly abducted mothers in most of our work with civil society, whilst ensuring that our documentation programme amplifies the voices of the young and vulnerable women in northern Uganda. In doing this, we integrated within JRP a unique documentation project, *Ododo Wa: Our Stories*, where several women were engaged in participatory research and training in leadership and advocacy skills. A testimony by one young woman we worked with sums it all up. She remarked, "...for long we victims of torture, rape and forced marriage have remained silent. Today we have the chance to speak on our own behalf marking an end to a long period of silence. My story has got a healing power and a testimony that many other girls went through the same suffering."

In addition, our unique action-oriented research interventions led us into publishing important local-level based research reports such as *As Long as You Live, You Will Survive* on the Omot massacre providing additional insights into 'what needs to be done' to ensure that the justice needs of the voiceless are brought to the attention of civil society and policy-makers.

In the run up to the forthcoming national elections in February 2011 in Uganda, our participation has been tremendous in ensuring that civil society and communities demand for the inclusion of transitional justice in candidates' election agendas. In making sure this is upheld, we launched a campaign, "Casting the Ballot to Address Victimhood: A Call to Put Transitional Justice on the Election Agenda," to cater for the overarching needs and aspirations of victims of conflict for justice.

We extend our gratitude to the most vulnerable victims of conflict in Uganda for whom we endear in our work and also extend our appreciation to our donors because none of this would have been possible without their generous support. Special thanks to the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Kampala, for the start-up funds in 2010; to the Hampton Foundation, the Social Sciences Research Council of Canada and the Liu Institute for Global Issues for supporting the work of the Ododo Wa department; and to the Netherlands Embassy, Kampala, for their past support.

Sincerely,



**Michael Otim**  
Board Chairman



**Boniface Ojok**  
Programme Coordinator

# STAFF

## PROGRAMME

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<b>David Opiyo</b>	<i>Team Leader Finance and Administration</i>
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<b>Lorna Akot</b>	<i>Intern</i>
<b>Harriet Aloyo</b>	<i>Intern</i>
<b>Ray Ranker</b>	<i>Intern</i>

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>Michael Otim</b>	<i>Chair and Co-founder</i>
<b>Dr. Erin Baines</b>	<i>Co-founder</i>
<b>Tonny Komakec</b>	<i>Member</i>
<b>Innocent Aloyo</b>	<i>Member</i>
<b>Margaret Ajok</b>	<i>Member</i>



JRP staff and supporters at the launch on July 23, 2010.  
Photo Credit: Lindsay McClain

# ACRONYMS

<b>CORE</b>	Community Reconciliation (team)
<b>CVI</b>	Child Voice International
<b>DAC</b>	Day of the African Child
<b>GoU</b>	Government of Uganda
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>ICTJ</b>	International Centre for Transitional Justice
<b>IJR</b>	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
<b>JLOS</b>	Justice, Law and Order Sector
<b>JRP</b>	Justice and Reconciliation Project
<b>KUNEDO</b>	Kumi Network for Development Organisations
<b>LRA</b>	Lord's Resistance Army
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>RPP</b>	Reflecting on Peace Practice
<b>TJ</b>	Transitional Justice



# YEAR-IN REVIEW: 2010

## BACKGROUND

The 2006 Juba peace process negotiations between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) brought to light hopes for peace and reconciliation in northern Uganda for the first time in over two decades. Besides the government effort towards establishing an accountability mechanism through the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) Working Group and other key stakeholders, relative peace has paved way for significant discourses on grassroots reconciliation initiatives. Key among the developments are civil society engagements through various notable networks and coalitions that have established a niche among victims of conflict in war-affected areas of north and northeastern Uganda.

On one hand, the evolution of the International Criminal Court (ICC) still impacts on justice and accountability discourses in Uganda. Having ratified the ICC's Rome Statute and made referral, Uganda (like other countries) is still caught up in the raging debate on the ICC as opposed to other transitional justice mechanisms. However it should be noted that at a general level, the needs in northern Uganda are slowly shifting from humanitarian aid to development, with transitional justice as a key ingredient to sustainable peace in the region. As for now, the space created by the Juba talks has left most people feeling ready to return to their villages and try to resume normal life.

Over the past year, JRP has worked in Gulu, Pader, Lira, Kitgum, Lamwo, Amuru, Soroti, Arua and Kumi districts to try and engage victims in the documentation of experiences of conflict in the region. Apart from beginning the documentation process, JRP has helped mobilise victims to meaningfully engage in their own healing and reconciliation processes.

This report will elaborate our work on the ground and is a selection and general overview of our activities during 2010. More detailed narratives are contained in our quarterly reports, and reports on particular activities can be found on the JRP website [www.justiceandreconciliation.com](http://www.justiceandreconciliation.com), or obtained on request from the JRP office in Gulu.

## LAUNCHING JRP

And as I said before, it is going to take sustained effort to really restore the hope and the confidence of peaceful and prosperous times ahead in northern Uganda. But we live in hopeful times. And I am also confident that JRP, as we launch it today, will play a catalytic role in generating support for justice for national reconciliation and for sustainable peace all over Uganda. And I wish you the best in this endeavor.

*-Remarks by H.E. Bjørg S. Leite, former Ambassador of Norway, at the JRP Launch, July 23, 2010*

Founded in 2004 by the Liu Institute for Global Issues (University of British Columbia, Canada) and Gulu District NGO Forum, JRP became an independent NGO in January 2010 with generous funding from the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala. Although based in Gulu, JRP has a national mandate given by Uganda's National NGO Board to carry out transitional justice work throughout the country. To inaugurate our work as an independent organisation, an official launch was held on July 23, 2010, officiated by Guest of Honour H.E. Bjørg S. Leite, the former Royal Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda. The function was graced by close to 100 civil society and local government leaders and elders, led by the then Chairman LC V, Hon. Norbert Mao. We are proud to report that to-date our work is being acknowledged by every stakeholder in Uganda and beyond.



Guests of Honour cutting the ribbon to officially open the building at the JRP launch on July 23.  
Photo Credit: Lindsay McClain

## COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

Over the past year, JRP has worked with individuals, communities and victim groups, empowering and providing them with tools to actively participate in the identification of "what needs to be done?" to promote community-level justice and reconciliation. The community mobilisation department worked with several communities during 2010, including Abia, Atiak, Mucwini, Lukodi, Mukura and Anaka, all with history of brutal atrocities, including massacres, abductions and torture. The following approaches were used:

## COMMUNITY DIALOGUES



Community members wait in line to share their opinions at the community dialogue in Abia in July.  
*Photo Credit: Sylvia Opinia*

Routinely conducted by JRP to elicit mass participation by victims, community dialogues provided opportunities for communities to air out their views, needs and aspirants regarding key transitional justice themes. Here, JRP was able to directly engage with the most vulnerable victims who were able to share personal experiences, express perspectives, clarify points of view, and develop solutions to community concerns and opportunities. Community dialogues enabled participants to express their opinions on local transitional justice related matters such as gender justice, truth-telling, traditional justice and reparations. The dialogues were usually conducted in open spaces, with participants utilizing a form of Acholi traditional approach called 'wang oo,' in which elders gather under a big tree to discuss matters affecting their communities.

For instance, on June 6, 2010, we conducted such a dialogue in Mucwini in conjunction with radio station Mega FM in anticipation of the ICC Review Conference that took place in Kampala in early June. At this dialogue, communities were able to discuss a broad range of justice issues, including not only the International Criminal Court (ICC), but also Uganda's new War Crimes Division to try perpetrators most responsible for gross human rights violations and other local TJ mechanisms. Three key themes emerged; the dialogue, which attracted over 200 people, highlighted the importance of knowing the truth, the need for compensation and the question of accountability for government perpetrators. Furthermore, the dialogue, like all the others we held during the year, created an opportunity for the community to interact with their local leaders and discuss important TJ concerns.

## DEVELOPING COMMUNITY RECONCILIATION MODELS

As a form of empowerment in terms of capacity building, this year JRP delved into existing community resources, empowering and helping local leaders and community-based organisations as well as victims groups to redirect their energies into being 'agents' of their own change. Piloting in three locations in Acholi sub-region, we were able to work with existing traditional structures to help victims and perceived perpetrators identify tools that can help them in taking active lead in reconciliation among their own communities.

For instance, as a response to several frustrations that victims of the Lukodi massacre demonstrated, JRP partnered with Child Voice International (CVI) to work with a group of victims who felt they should take lead in addressing their own justice issues. In this community, there was a growing frustration that external actors often never offer concrete solutions to their problems, as expressed by an old man in one of our meetings:

I lost four of my sons during the massacre, and since then I have lived with many of those who participated in these brutal killings. What can ICC do for me to promote reconciliation? I believe they will arrest the perpetrators, but how can I reconcile with them? I need 'mato oput.'<sup>1 2</sup>

In our intervention, we understood him to mean that this community has a particular understanding of what justice means to them, and came to a conclusion that transitional justice can also be addressed at that level. So, in order to address some of these concerns, we have begun to engage in several processes with the victim groups and perceived perpetrators in order to collectively develop a better model for community reconciliation to help address the many unanswered questions in relation to the conflict, especially those that relate to justice and reconciliation. To-date, community leaders have formed a Community Reconciliation (CORE) team that takes lead in organising dialogues with elders and traditional leaders around healing and reconciliation.



Women during a trust-building experience for the CORE Team in Lukodi.  
*Photo Credit: Sylvia Opinia*

<sup>1</sup> 'Mato oput' is an Acholi traditional reconciliation ceremony performed in the case of an intentional or accidental murder.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from a statement by one community member in a June community meeting with the CORE team in Lukodi

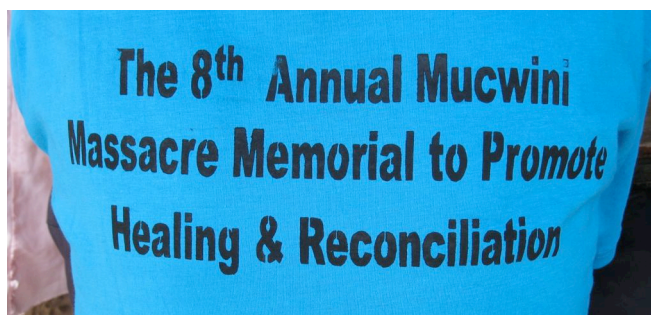
## FACILITATING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS AS ADVOCATES

### Day of the African Child

Since 1991, Uganda has joined the world in celebrating the *Day of the African Child* (DAC) annually on the 16th of June. This year, the day was commemorated in Uganda under the theme, "Planning and Budgeting for the Well-Being of the Child: A Collective Responsibility." Together with other civil society organisations working with children in conflict, JRP joined the campaign in ensuring that the unique peace, justice and reconciliation issues hindering the well-being of children affected by conflict are highlighted and followed-up. To further emphasis this point, JRP released a statement titled, "Planning and Budgeting for the Well-Being of the Child: Considerations for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation," which can be accessed at [www.justiceandreconciliation.com](http://www.justiceandreconciliation.com).

### Community-led Advocacy in Mucwini

Following a capacity-building workshop on advocacy conducted with the Mucwini Massacre Memorial Committee in July, the Committee with support from JRP developed a statement on issues that concern the victims of the 2002 Mucwini massacre. These issues were revealed during a follow-up meeting we held with the Committee in early August.

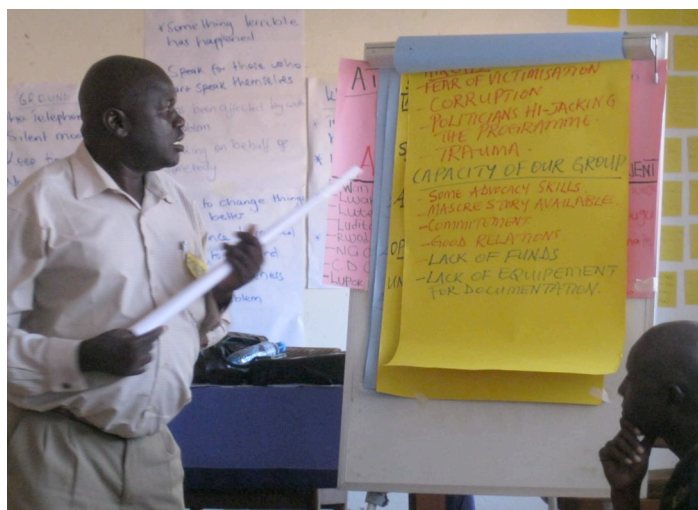


The back of a T-shirt JRP facilitated to be printed for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Mucwini Massacre Memorial Service.  
Photo Credit: Sylvia Opinia

The statement called various stakeholders to action and was read by the Committee during the *8th Annual Mucwini Massacre Memorial Service* on August 14 in Mucwini sub-county, Kitgum district. This statement was also widely disseminated by JRP, and excerpts appeared in the media, including on NTV and in *New Vision* and *Monitor* newspapers. The full statement can also be accessed on our website at [www.justiceandreconciliation.com](http://www.justiceandreconciliation.com).

## CAPACITY-BUILDING

JRP assists community-based organisations, local civil society groups and victim associations to develop skills and understanding of the local TJ context. Where periods of prolonged conflict has decimated the entire population, their ability to think and proactively engage in meaningful discourses on transitional justice is most often limited, if not ignored. Our mandate is to provide empowering tools to as many of these groups through



A representative from Mukura presents his group's advocacy strategy at a workshop for massacre survivor groups in September in Gulu.  
Photo Credit: Lindsay McClain

training. Over the past year, several local, traditional, youth and women's group leaders in five communities (Abia, Lukodi, Mukura, Mucwini and Atiak) benefited from such trainings in order to improve their skills in advocacy and conflict analysis.

One tool that was often used in the conflict analysis training was the *Reflecting on Peace Practice* (RPP) force field analysis technique where teams of victims were helped to come up with a number of factors that are currently working against peaceful coexistence among victims and community members. Examples included land wrangles, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), experiences of *cen*<sup>3</sup> as a result of lack of traditional cleansing of some areas,

feelings of revenge towards those who are believed to be perpetrators (e.g. formerly abducted persons who are believed to have participated in killings), among others. Such

tools helped communities and victim groups begin to explore strategies for community reconciliation.

<sup>3</sup> Ghostly vengeance commonly believed to torment people who live around areas where people were murdered during conflict.

## CIVIL SOCIETY TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE TRAINING

As part of mobilisation of our local constituency, JRP engaged in capacity-building of local organisations interested in promoting healing and reconciliation. In an effort to bolster their skills, JRP in collaboration with International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) embarked on a week-long training on transitional justice in Kampala between January 25-29, 2010, as a means of capacity-building of local stakeholders on transitional justice. The training relied heavily on skills from international experts provided by ICTJ, while blending this with local expert facilitation from JRP staff. Over 25 local organisations participated in this capacity-building program.

## VICTIM EXCHANGE PROJECTS

In order to facilitate active learning among victims of diverse backgrounds and experiences, JRP brought together several victim groups in two exchange programmes. The rationale here was that engagement with local peace and reconciliation initiatives is easily fostered when victims learn from each other. In this way, they are able to be strong advocates in the area of their own and other victims' transition to peace through networking. In 2010, we carried out two exchanges in Acholi and West Nile regions, where we facilitated workshop sessions with victim groups from carefully selected areas that experienced grave violations of human rights during the conflict.

## CAMPAIGN TO PUT TJ ON THE ELECTION AGENDA

In order to ensure that victims' concerns are prioritised during the election process, we developed a special campaign titled, "Casting the Ballot to Address Victimhood: A Call to Put Transitional Justice on the Election Agenda," to mobilise war-affected communities to demand their concerns be addressed and acknowledged by candidates and parties contesting for seats in the 2011 elections in Uganda. Pledge cards were developed to remind voters to hold their leaders accountable to addressing victims' needs, such as

accountability for past crimes, a national reparations policy, a national truth-seeking process, memorialisation and structural changes.



JRP staff and board members with Bishop Ochola at the TJ election campaign press conference.

*Photo Credit: Lindsay McClain*

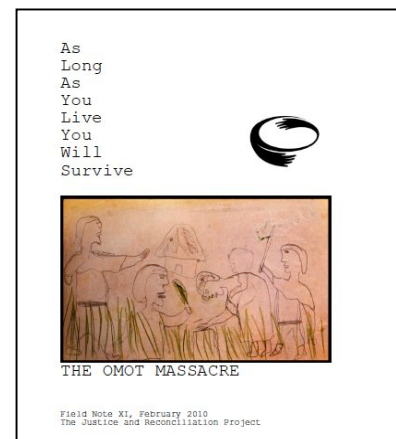
Community dissemination of the campaign information and cards has been ongoing within all the field activities. A community dialogue in Anaka was dedicated to launch the campaign within the communities. JRP held a press conference on November 16 to officially launch the campaign and inform and engage media and the general public, the result of which was phenomenal. A large color photo and article covering the press conference ran in the *New Vision* on November 18, as well as several days of news coverage on all the local radio stations.

## DOCUMENTATION

The Documentation department this year focused on conflict-related experiences and memories of individuals, communities and victim groups. By carrying out documentation, we were able to construct a collective narrative of victims' human rights violations and provide opportunities for local voices through various methods. Through research-based community meetings and focus group discussions, we were able to elicit sessions where victims could speak and construct the history of violence that they and their communities have suffered. By doing this, we were able to better understand the impacts of the conflict upon communities and how issues such as reconciliation and healing are being pursued.

## AS LONG AS YOU LIVE, YOU WILL SURVIVE: THE OMOT MASSACRE

In February, JRP released its eleventh field note, titled "As Long as You Live, You Will Survive," on the 2002 Omot massacre. The title stems from a quote from one of the survivors and indicates just how much survivors value the little left of them in the aftermath of grave violations. In a nutshell, life itself is hope for those fortunate to have not been abducted or



Cover of the Omot massacre report.  
*Credit: JRP*

murdered during the massacre. Such a saying is not new across many of the massacre sites in northern Uganda.

This JRP report was the first systematic documentation of the massacre that took place in Omot. Eight years later, the community has far from achieved reconciliation and restitution. The people of Omot have been stripped of their right to justice, as the wrongs committed against them have gone unacknowledged by the government or LRA and no system of redress has been explored.

As a result, the report provided several recommendations to key stakeholders, including Government of Uganda, some of which urge Government to: formally acknowledge the Omot massacre of 2002 as well as all other massacres that have occurred in communities in northern Uganda; recognize and redress their failure to protect Ugandan citizens from the LRA attacks; hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes; support local approaches to justice and reconciliation; provide for reparations and create provision for a memorial designed and constructed with victims' involvement.



Lukodi massacre memorial stone.  
Photo Credit: Lino Owor Ogora

## **LUKODI DOCUMENTATION PROJECT**

Lukodi is one of the many communities in northern Uganda that suffered from attacks by the rebels of the LRA. JRP's interventions in Lukodi started in May 2010 with a preliminary field visit by members of the JRP team. Approximately 54 respondents were interviewed in individual interviews and two focus group discussions were also conducted. A report on this project will be launched early 2011.

### ***Creating a Database of Individual Experiences***

The Documentation department collected experiences of key individuals who suffered during the conflict in Lukodi at the hands of both rebels and government forces. These individuals serve as a testimony to atrocities committed, and their stories have been instrumental in providing us with insights into the nature and manner of the massacre in Lukodi. In addition, victims have testified that by researchers speaking to

them time and over again, they have been able to trace their path to healing and think of ways of confronting the culture of silence that existed before.

## **DOCUMENTING EXPERIENCES IN PALABEK**

Documentation was also conducted in Palabek in the Ayuu Alaali village. Like in Lukodi, this involved engaging the community using a series of methods in order to gather rich narratives from them about the past. Methods used included: in-depth interviews, timelines, community mapping, and focus group discussions with survivors of the massacre. Target groups included: survivors, relatives of the deceased, local leaders, community members, former IDPs and people abducted on the day of the massacre. Data was gathered in May 2010 and frequent follow-ups done up to June 2010. A detailed report will be launched in early 2011.

## **DOCUMENTING THE MUKURA MASSACRE**

The Mukura massacre first came to the attention of JRP researchers through an announcement made by Uganda's Minister for Finance on June 10, 2010, that a budgetary allocation of 200 million Ugandan shillings had been set aside for families of the victims of the 1989 Mukura massacre in Teso. While JRP applauded the government's move to compensate victims of the massacre, the announcement raised several disturbing questions that required answers. What for example had prompted this abrupt announcement by the government after more than 20 years? Did the government consult with families of those who died and survivors of the massacre prior to



JRP with survivors of the 1989 Mukura massacre in Teso.  
Photo Credit: Lino Owor Ogora

making this announcement? How did the government arrive at the figure of 200 million shillings? How would the money be channelled to the beneficiaries in a transparent manner?

With these questions in mind, JRP paid a preliminary visit to Kumi district and the village of Mukura in June and interacted with many victims and community-based victim groups and networks, such as the Kumi Network for Development Organizations (KUNEDO), who helped provide more insight into the massacre. We were also able to interview many eyewitnesses of the massacre and interact with survivors of the ordeal. Several interview sessions were conducted and a detailed narrative report of the massacre awaits 2011.

## RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

### *FIELD SURVEYS IN WEST NILE, ACHOLI, LANGO AND TESO*

Unlike the Acholi region, not many of the conflict-affected areas of West Nile and northeastern Uganda have benefitted from interventions in terms of research and advocacy. As part of our work with victims in these areas, we carried out an insightful survey of the new TJ dilemmas in various areas that often times have lagged behind in terms of civil society and Government of Uganda interventions. Areas visited were: Corner Kilak, Achol-pii, and Omot in Pader; Palabek Kal, Palabek Ogili, Ayuu Alali in Kitgum; Kumi and Soroti in Teso sub-region; as well as the Madi and Lubgara regions in West Nile, where we met a number of people in districts of Adjumani, Yumbe, Moyo and Arua. The primary objectives of these visits were:



Community members near the Achol-pii mass grave.  
*Photo Credit: Lino Owor Ogora*

- To meet with members of the communities and discuss significant events that took place there during the conflict;
- To inquire whether or not these events could be incorporated into community peace-building and reconciliation initiatives;
- To bring sentiments in these areas to the attention of civil society and other stakeholders.

Note: We intend to facilitate a process of continued documentation where communities will be key stakeholders in the process of identifying their history and making it part of their own memory and healing.

In these visits, JRP learned that there is an eminent need for various forms of advocacy engagements in communities surveyed. Transitional justice issues seem either not represented, or underrepresented or misrepresented in many of these areas with many facts unknown. For instance, many significant events took place during the conflict but little or nothing has been officially documented. On the whole, we came to a conclusion that such sample communities require some kind of documentation as a tool that will help preserve the memory of what happened and to prevent the repetition of human rights violations in the future.

### *ENHANCING GRASSROOTS PARTICIPATION IN TJ*

In collaboration and support from the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, the Research and Advocacy department undertook a campaign, entitled “Enhancing Grassroots Participation in Transitional Justice.” This initiative was aimed at re-awakening the debate on the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms in northern Uganda. The project pursued a dual strategy of interfacing with Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) and other government bodies and grassroots communities to help ensure that the views of grassroots people are included in the transitional justice debates. We were able to carry out extensive consultations with a broad range of key stakeholders such as grassroots communities, government officials and CSOs in West Nile, Acholi and Lango sub-regions, with plans to expand to Teso in early 2011. Additional meetings with officials from JLOS began in Kampala in November.

#### ***West Nile Consultation***

Our first consultation was held in West Nile, where the team mobilized over 30 victims and grassroots representatives from all over West Nile gathered for a two-day consultation at Hotel Rocks and Roots in Arua town. Here we explored views that war-affected persons in this region hold on war-related justice issues. Members invited for the consultation included: cultural leaders from the Lugbara, Alur and Jonam traditions; religious representatives from the Muslim, Anglican and Catholic communities; war victims from the *West Nile Kony Rebel War Victims Association*; war victims that suffered at the hands of the West Nile Bank Front and UNLF II; representatives of women’s groups; and ex-combatants from both the LRA and UNLF. Participants came from all the different districts of West Nile and the conference presented victims with opportunities to

provide crucial insights into transitional justice needs. At the end of the consultation, media houses interviewed the victims and ran their stories in radios and newspapers.



JRP and participants in the JRP/IJR consultation in West Nile.  
Photo Credit: Harriet Aloyo

## **Acholi and Lango Consultations**

The second consultation was held in Gulu town in December at the GUSCO Peace Centre. This consultation covered the regions of Acholi and Lango and was attended by over 30 participants, including cultural and religious leaders, victims, members of civil society and government representatives from Acholi and Lango sub-regions.

## **MEDIA AND OUTREACH**

JRP received a steady stream of media attention in 2010. We often appeared monthly in national publications or television programmes, and this coverage placed JRP on the

map and expanded our audience to other parts of Uganda, especially Kampala. The following list highlights media coverage received during the year:

- “In Memory of Mukura Massacre Victims,” *Sunday Monitor*, July 11, 2010. Available at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/-/689844/955242/-/view/printVersion/-/106cavnz/-/>.
- ‘Te Yat’ Community Dialogues, *Mega Fm*, June-October 2010
- JRP Launch and Lukodi Community Dialogue, *NTV*, July 24, 2010.
- “Delay Forgiveness—LRA Victims,” Chris Ocowun, *New Vision*, August 1, 2010. Available at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/16/727574?highlight&q=Delay%20Forgiveness%97LRA%20Victims>.
- Mucwini Massacre Memorial Service, *NTV*, August 14, 2010.
- “Families of Mucwini Victims Want Reparations,” James Eriku, *Daily Monitor*, August 20, 2010. Available at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/980774/-/x3sbey/-/index.html>.
- Mucwini Victims Story (title unknown), *New Vision*, August 23, 2010 (approx.).
- Survivor Group Advocacy Training, *Mega Fm*, September 21-23, 2010.
- Survivor Group Advocacy Training, *Radio King*, September 23, 2010.
- “New Hope for Northern Ugandans Seeking Reparations from the Government,” NUTJWG Press Conference, *Ugandans Abroad*, October 13, 2010. Available at <http://ugandansabroad.org/2010/10/13/new-hope-for-northern-ugandans-seeking-reparations-from-the-government/>.
- “More than 13 people fought for peace in northern Uganda,” *New Vision*, October 27, 2010. Available at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/459/736281>.
- “Violence Against Women,” *Daily Monitor*, November 1, 2010. Available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201011010785.html>.
- “Letter to presidential candidates,” *Daily Monitor*, November 8, 2010. Available at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/OpEd/Letters/-/806314/1048938/-/yqhoey/-/index.html>.
- “Encuentro del Grupo de Memoria Historica con investigadores de Uganda y Canada,” *Memoria Historica*, mid-November 2010. Available at <http://www.memoriahistorica-cnrr.org.co/s-noticias/articulo-56/>.
- “NGOs want war victims paid,” *New Vision*, November 18, 2010.
- “Celebrating 100 Years of Gulu: Contributions to Lasting Peace, Justice and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda,” Supplement in *Daily Monitor*, November 29, 2010.
- “Northern Uganda Asks Tough Questions,” *Daily Monitor*, November 30, 2010. Available at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/SpecialReports/Elections/-/859108/1061936/-/jm0k70/-/index.html>.
- “Compensate northern war victims,” *Daily Monitor*, December 4, 2010. Available at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1065988/-/ckk0twz/-/index.html>.
- “Reparation need grows in Northern Uganda,” *Daily Monitor*, December 6, 2010. Available at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1067192/-/ckisqiz/-/index.html>.

Furthermore, the following media advisories or press releases were distributed in 2010:

- “Casting election ballots to address victimhood,” JRP, November 16, 2010.

- “Arua- Enhancing grassroots involvement in transitional justice debates,” JRP, November 23, 2010.
- “Gulu- Enhancing grassroots involvement in transitional justice debates,” JRP, November 30, 2010.

## ICC REVIEW CONFERENCE

Uganda hosted the International Criminal Court (ICC) Review Conference in Kampala from May 31 to June 11, 2010. This conference represented an unparalleled gathering of states to discuss international criminal justice. The conference provided a unique and timely occasion for governments to express their views on the importance of the ICC when national courts are unable or unwilling to prosecute genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and to promote a fair, effective ICC. On our part as a civil society member, we were accredited to attend the conference as a civil society organisation committed to securing justice for victims. In so doing, we joined other members in various advocacy platforms at the *People’s Space*, where we participated in showcasing our work and participating in some symposiums. It was an opportunity to also explore possible partnerships with other organizations globally working in the field of transitional justice.

## ODODO WA: OUR STORIES

In 2010 the *Life History Project* became *Ododo Wa: Our Stories* and received a more permanent home within JRP. *Ododo Wa* is a joint initiative between the Liu Institute for Global Issues and JRP. The project engages war-affected women in research, documentation and advocacy on their justice needs. It does this through capacity-building and leadership training, the creation of personal history books, and networking among different women groups through theatre works. This year, we were able to work with a number of groups and individuals across Acholi and Lango sub-regions.

## RESEARCHING VULNERABLE WOMEN

Our research component was attuned to combining literary and academics by informing and engaging audiences and stakeholders. Our particular foci were the women formerly abducted by LRA and those who were forced to participate in various forms of atrocities, raped, served as porters and made wives.

Over the past year, we were able to engage the women in several participatory themes around their lives. For instance, during early February we worked with *Rwot Lakica* women’s group to understand the nature of violence women experienced during captivity as LRA abductees and the strategies they used to survive in the bush despite all the violence. Also, around the same period, we engaged them in establishing kinship and social networks, where we were interested in understanding how social networks were formed, how that impacted on the inner operation of the LRA and how people formed networks based on kinship. Other crucial areas of engagement with the women included marriage concerns and the overriding justice needs.



Women participating in the ‘web of unity’ exercise during an Ododo Wa theatre day. Photo Credit: Lindsay McClain

Perhaps, of crucial significance, we found that there is need for justice for these women, and that justice needs remain integral in their quest for survival and recognition in ongoing transitional justice processes in Uganda. Working with the women, we were able to discover that as these victims struggle with their daily lives -- amidst rejection, stigma, poverty and destitution -- their justice needs remain largely ignored, despite the seemingly elaborate transitional justice and other post-conflict development programmes in Uganda.

Overall, they yearn for economic justice and reconciliation with ex-bush husbands after apology and full disclosure of what happened and why it happened. A few of the women have demanded for prosecutions and accountability but with a justifiable fear of revenge, as few if any protection mechanisms exist. Interestingly, many are also afraid of who will help them raise their children, if their former bush ‘husbands’ are prosecuted.



## RETREATS AMONG VICTIMS

While working with and empowering the women groups, JRP often organised retreat sessions for them to reflect and give input into various themes that affect their lives.

These included:

- The April retreat on violence and survival strategies, where the young women shared their experiences on how they survived violence while in captivity
- The November session in Gulu, where we used retreats to unearth the history of the LRA.
- In May where we held a theatre retreat which provided opportunities for girls to participate in various theater activities to relax the mind, to physically relax the body, to have fun, to build trust and confidence, and to learn how to interpret their experiences and make meaning out of them. This session was facilitated by a team of experts from the Liu Institute for Global issues.

It should be noted that these workshop sessions offered true revelations on our side because we were able to get in touch with many women who reported that they had never spoken to anyone the same way before. They also revealed that there is a danger that there could be no place for justice for women of such extreme marginalisation if their concerns are not put into consideration.

## ADVOCACY DRIVES WITH WOMEN

Working directly with victims, JRP provided advocacy platforms to ensure that women’s groups were proactively engaging with a wider audience in matters that affect them. Last year, Ododo Wa carried out the following advocacy activities:

### Gender Justice Statement

Women from Ododo Wa wrote a statement that highlighted gender justice concerns. Four women’s groups participated in drafting the document with the intention of reaching out to a wider civil society and government forums. The paper was disseminated to a number of people, including at JRP’s launch in July, and provided a unique opportunity for the girls to draw attention to the question of justice for the most vulnerable and forgotten victims in northern Uganda conflict. The full statement, “Pursuing Justice for Women and Children in Northern Uganda,” can be accessed at [www.justiceandreconciliation.com](http://www.justiceandreconciliation.com).



Front page of the Ododo Wa gender justice statement.  
Credit: JRP

### Forum Theatre Advocacy

Forum theatre is a form of drama done in our theatre activities with the women. Last year, we discovered that forum theatre was a strong medium through which war-affected persons willingly express their views and needs for justice.

Through theatre forums the women have been empowered to face audiences through drama, songs and traditional dances. Among some of the drama themes performed were the ‘amnesty and forgiveness’ drama and the ‘justice for women’ drama. Apart from passing messages to the various audiences, through drama the women have been able to raise some funds to provide basic support for their children in schools.

## LEADERSHIP & SKILL MENTORSHIP

One of the objectives of Ododo Wa is to impart leadership skills to the war-affected women. Last year, we played a facilitative role in training and mentoring three young women to take up leadership positions in the various community-based groups and associations of women. We continue to do this by engaging them to work at the project as volunteers and train them in English speaking and writing, as well as basic computer skills. By doing so, we are preparing the women to become their own agents of change and deliberate on matters that affect their lives. We are grateful to the three women selected because they have been able to demonstrate on two occasions just how much their public speaking skills have improved.

## EXCHANGE VISITS

Through local and global networking, we have been able to expose the war-affected women in Uganda to experiences of conflict in other parts of the region. In July, we were grateful to receive a team of Colombians to Uganda under the auspices of the Liu Institute for Global Issues, UBC. This team, comprising of two leaders of local victim groups in Afro-Colombian communities, had the opportunity to visit the war-affected women in northern Uganda. During their visits, they organised several workshops and experience-sharing sessions with the different groups of war-affected communities in Gulu. We were also able to share

experiences of conflict at a broader national level, linking this to local transitional justice efforts that affect marginalised populations. In return, two officers from Ododo Wa travelled to Colombia for a similar exchange visit in October.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, these are some of the many ways that our work has positively impacted war-affected communities in northern Uganda in 2010. As our first year as an independent organisation, our staff and level of outreach was able to expand considerably, and we succeeded in reaching more communities than ever before and raising the reputation of our method of direct community involvement. None of our efforts would have been possible without the generous support of our donors, especially the Norwegian Embassy, Kampala.

As we look to the future and our goals for the next year, we are reminded of all that has been learned and accomplished in 2010. Thank you to all who have been a part of this process.

To learn more about JRP and any of the activities mentioned in this report, please visit us online at [www.justiceandreconciliation.com](http://www.justiceandreconciliation.com) or email us at [info@justiceandreconciliation.com](mailto:info@justiceandreconciliation.com).



JRP's programme coordinator presenting a token from Uganda to a survivor's group in Colombia.  
*Credit: Ketty Anyeko*



