



Updates from JRP

September 2010



A Monthly Newsletter from the Justice and Reconciliation Project

Special Points of Interest:

- JRP became an independent organization in January 2010 with funding from the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala.
- You can visit us online and sign up to receive our newsletters at www.justiceandreconciliation.com.

Welcome to the September Edition of the JRP Newsletter

Welcome to the September edition of our newsletter. Since 2005, the **Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP)** has promoted locally sensitive and sustainable peace in northern

Uganda by focusing on the active involvement of grassroots communities in local-level transitional justice.

Thank you for taking the

time to read our latest updates. For more information on our work, we invite you to follow us on Twitter via [@JRP_Uganda](https://twitter.com/JRP_Uganda) or to visit our website by clicking [here](#).

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Special Campaign: Putting TJ on the Election Agenda

As Uganda prepares for the upcoming elections, we see an immense opportunity for war-affected communities to influence the direction that the justice and reconciliation debate takes in this country.

As we mentioned last month, we have developed a special campaign to [put transitional justice on the election agenda](#).

So remember: your vote counts. Use it wisely and vote in favor of those who commit themselves once elected to:

1. Accountability for past abuses
2. National reconciliation

through truth-telling

3. Reparations for war victims
4. Memorialization
5. Gender justice
6. Structural reforms

JRP has developed these six points after consulting with war-affected communities across the North. We believe that if communities unify their demands under these points, we will have the advantage of strength in numbers.

We all want to combat prevailing cycles of violence and ensure a lasting, sustainable peace in northern

Uganda and elsewhere.

Putting TJ on the election agenda is crucial to prioritizing the issues, meeting victims' and survivors' needs, ending impunity for past abuses, and moving

CASTING THE BALLOT TO ADDRESS VICTIMHOOD: A CALL TO PUT TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE ON THE 2011 ELECTION AGENDA

Ask your candidates: **YOUR VOTE COUNTS**

Where are the considerations for **peace, justice & reconciliation** in YOUR manifesto?

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(continued) Putting TJ on the Election Agenda

forward as a peaceful Uganda.

upcoming Ugandan elections, and any others.

For comments or to get involved in the campaign, please contact info@justiceandreconciliation.com. We welcome input and partnership with civil society, grassroots communities, contestants in the

Above: Sneak peak at our voter cards that will be disseminated to communities across northern Uganda (Credit: Lindsay McClain)



“Over the next month JRP will follow-up with each community to monitor their progress.”

Survivor Advocacy Training Workshop

In order to mobilize survivor groups to lobby and advocate for issues that affect them, JRP organized a training workshop on basic advocacy skills for 24 representatives of survivor/victim groups from northern Uganda.

Teso sub-region

The workshop, held from September 28-30 at the Sports View Garden Inn in Gulu, had objectives to empower survivor/victim groups with necessary skills in advocacy and lobbying and to develop advocacy strategies and plans for their specific groups. Over the course of three days, each group identified and analyzed pressing issues facing victims and survivors in their communities and then developed an advocacy plan to remedy the problem.

with others who have survived similar atrocities and to share experiences and solutions. It also provided an opportunity for groups' ideas to be heard beyond the workshop. News pieces on the advocacy training ran on both Mega FM and Radio King.

The representatives came from five massacre sites across the region, including:

- **Abia**, Alebtong district, Lango sub-region
- **Atiak**, Amuru district, Acholi sub-region
- **Lukodi**, Gulu district, Acholi sub-region
- **Mucwini**, Kitgum district, Acholi sub-region
- **Mukura**, Kumi district,

In addition, the training gave each of the attendees the opportunity to interact

Over the next month JRP will follow-up with each community to monitor their progress. In November, we intend to hold a second workshop in Mukura, Kumi district, to further build the five groups' plans.

Above: A representative from Mukura explains his group's advocacy strategy (Photo Credit: Ronald Okello)



Expanding Activities to West Nile

From August 31 to September 3, JRP team members traveled to northern Uganda's West Nile sub-region on a site-visit to assess transitional justice (TJ) issues in the region. The information collected will serve to better inform future JRP interventions in West Nile.

During the visit, JRP traveled to Adjumani, Moyo, Yumbe, Arua and Nebbi districts. In addition to meeting with three civil society organizations (CSOs), the team attended a workshop organized by the Northern Uganda Transitional Justice Working Group (NUTJWG) that brought together key CSOs

to discuss TJ issues in West Nile.

Communities in West Nile have suffered from conflict and displacement since the late 1970s when former president Idi Amin Dada, from Koboko in West Nile, was overthrown and foreign tribes sought revenge for atrocities committed in

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(continued) Expanding Activities to West Nile

Uganda under Amin's rule. According to representatives JRP spoke to, many communities in West Nile feel disconnected from current programmes and processes aimed at the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the greater North. They also feel there is little emphasis at the national

and international levels on accountability for injustices suffered in West Nile during the decades of instability.

In the near future, JRP will return to West Nile to begin actively engaging war-affected communities on issues of transitional jus-

stice. Both our documentation and community mobilization teams will travel to West Nile next month. Stay tuned for more information on our expanded activities.

Above: A presentation at the NUTJWG meeting for CSOs in West Nile on September 1 (Photo Credit: Lino Owor Ogora)



Putting TJ on the Election Agenda in Anaka

JRP, in conjunction with radio station Mega Fm, held a community dialogue in Anaka sub-county, Nwoya district, on September 25. The dialogue's theme, "[Casting the Ballot to Address Victimhood: A Call to Put Transitional Justice on the Election Agenda](#)," correlated with JRP's special campaign on the same topic (see above).

communities are addressed in their manifestos.

The dialogue was attended by more than 100 community members, including the L.C. I and L.C. II chairmen of the area who gave the opening remarks. Rosalba Oywa, permanent member of Mega Fm's 'Te-Yat' programme, and Lindsay McClain, representative from JRP, served as panelists.

During the dialogue, the six main points for the campaign were discussed with the community members, and local candidates were asked to make commitments to ensure that TJ issues relevant to their

The dialogue is scheduled to be broadcast on Mega Fm on Saturday, September 16, from 10am until midday. During the episode, regional Members of

Parliament contesting for re-election will respond to Anaka's call to put TJ on the election agenda.

Note: Summarized transcriptions of all JRP community dialogues are in progress and will be posted on the JRP website when finished. While some of the recorded dialogues will be aired in their entirety on Mega Fm, others will be edited and played in clips during interactive in-studio panel discussions on Mega Fm's 'Te-Yat' programme.

Above: A community member comments on transitional justice at the Anaka community dialogue on September 25 (Photo Credit: Ronald Okello)



“The dialogue was attended by more than 100 community members.”

On-going Engagement in Lukodi

As our recent newsletters have mentioned, JRP is currently engaged in an on-going process to develop a community reconciliation model in Lukodi village, Bungatira sub-county, Gulu district.

During the month of September, JRP held several activities in Lukodi, including:

- **Community Theatre Introduction:** As a way of introducing the community theatre ap-

proach to reconciliation in Lukodi, JRP's community mobilization team organized a meeting with select young mothers in the village. This first meeting was mainly for



(Continued) On-going Engagement in Lukodi

“There is little evidence to suggest that most of these men were anything other than innocent civilians.”

team-building and included a number of exercises to get to know the women. A general discussion was also held on the topic of what justice means to them, some experiences of injustice and/or justice that they have gone through, and challenges they have faced while seeking for justice.

- **Follow-up Documentation on the Lukodi Massacre:** During September, JRP's

documentation team further interviewed eyewitnesses and survivors of the 2004 Lukodi massacre to gain further insight into the causes and consequences of the massacre. During the month of October, more follow-up individual documentation will be done.

- **CORE Team:** A meeting was held with the Community Reconciliation (CORE) Team in Lukodi to guide members in conducting con-

flict analysis using the RPP (Reflecting on Peace Practice) force field analysis technique. The team came up with a number of factors that are currently working against peaceful coexistence among the community members and explored strategies for combatting them.

Above: Members of the Lukodi CORE Team participate in a human candle exercise for self-introductions (Photo Credit: Sylvia Opinia)

Documenting the 1989 Mukura Massacre

From September 6-10, members of JRP's documentation team visited Mukura sub-county, Kumi district, Teso sub-region, to meet with members of the community and document the 1989 Mukura massacre.

During this time, we interviewed members of civil society, government officials, survivors of the massacre, and victims' families, allowing us to gain insight into many perspectives on the massacre.



According to our findings, on July 11, 1989, the 106th Battalion of the NRA (former name of the na-

tional army) rounded-up 300 men suspected of being rebel collaborators against the NRA regime and incarcerated them in a train wagon.

There is little evidence to suggest that most of these men were anything other than innocent civilians. By the time they were released, 87 had suffocated to death. (This figure and some other details are highly contested, showing the need for a credible truth-seeking process into the event).

On June 10, Ugandan Finance Minister Syda Bumba announced that

families of victims of the Mukura massacre would receive a total of 200 million Ugandan shillings, as set aside in the 2010/11 national budget.

This information and more gathered during our September visit to Mukura will be compiled into an upcoming report to document the massacre.

Above: The dormant railway line in Mukura, where 87 men perished in 1989 in a train wagon during a massacre by the military (Photo Credit: Lino Owor Ogora)



Visit us on the web!

www.justiceandreconciliation.com

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Working for justice and reconciliation with war-affected communities

The Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) in Gulu, northern Uganda, 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 communities affected by conflict. We aim to promote sustainable peace through the active involvement of war-affected communities in research and advocacy. In addition, our work seeks to provide tools to empower other victims and survivors of conflict in Africa's Great Lakes region also in situations of conflict.

Relevant Partner Events in September

This month, we attended several events hosted by partners and CSOs. In addition to building our capacity as an organization, these events allow us to network with others in the field of transitional justice, whilst sharing the sentiments of the communities in which we work with a broader audience. The following are three such events we attended in September:

- From September 13 - 14, JRP staff attended a **practitioners' conference on victim and witness protection** in Kampala. Organized by UNOHCHR, practitioners were updated on the progress of the Law Reform Commission in developing witness protection legislation for Uganda, including the dilemma of how to best provide this protection.

Recommendations were made for formal and quasi-judicial and informal justice mechanisms.

- On September 22, JRP staff attended a **seminar in Kampala on genocide prevention** organized by the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

This seminar provided an opportunity to liaise with the UN on activities for the prevention of genocide and to discuss the responsibility of states in genocide prevention.

- From September 22-23, JRP staff attended a **symposium in Lira for CSOs on incorporating international justice trends in the fight**

against impunity and the promotion of accountability in Uganda. The event was hosted by the Uganda Coalition on the International Criminal Court.

This symposium provided updates on outcomes of the recent International Criminal Court (ICC) Review Conference in Kampala and the newly passed ICC Act in Uganda. We noted that there is need for future follow-up on the issue of victim participation and protection, especially in relation to Uganda's War Crimes Division.