



Occupation and Carnage

Recounting Atrocities Committed by the NRA's 35th
Battalion in Namokora Sub-County in August 1986

JRP Field Note XIX, March 2014

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About the Justice and Reconciliation Project

The Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) was established in 2005 in Gulu, Uganda to understand and explain the interests, needs, concerns and views of communities affected by conflict and to promote sustainable peace through the active involvement of war-affected communities in research and advocacy.

Find out more about JRP at <http://www.justiceandreconciliation.com> or email info@justiceandreconciliation.com

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Front cover: Namokora memorial site, Namokora, July 2013.

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ACRONYMS

FEDEMU	Federal Democratic Movement
GoU	Government of Uganda
IO	Intelligence Officer
JRP	Justice and Reconciliation Project
LMG	Light Machine Gun
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRA	National Resistance Army
NUREMSA	Namokora United Relatives of the Massacred and Survivors Association
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPDA	Uganda Peoples Defense Army

REPORT SUMMARY

On 19 August 1986, the 35th Battalion of the National Resistance Army (NRA) allegedly massacred up to 71 men and women from Namokora and other surrounding sub-counties in a Tata lorry at Wiigweng in Oryang village, Namokora sub-county. These men and women were falsely accused of being rebel collaborators and/or having plans to oust the new National Resistance Army (NRA) government that had just come to power through a guerrilla coup. According to findings by the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) the murdered civilians were innocent men and women. Herded into the Tata lorry, over 89 civilians found themselves piled onto each other with hardly any space as they were driven to an unknown destination, being closely escorted by a white pickup truck filled with armed NRA soldiers. After driving for about three kilometres, they were gunned down. Seventy one died and eighteen of them escaped with gunshot wounds.

Twenty seven years after this massacre, JRP brings an account of what took place, based on survivor's recollections in order to bring the plight of these survivors and relatives of those who died to light. Through our interaction with the victims and relatives of the victims, we discovered that no written record of this massacre had ever been done.

In moving forward, the survivors of Namokora constructed a monument in remembrance of those who died, and on 19 August 2013 conducted their first memorial prayer since 1986 when the massacre happened. On 14 May 2013, the survivors and relatives of the victims wrote a position paper to the President of the Republic of Uganda in which they called

upon the government to provide some assistance to help the households who lost their relatives and the survivors, and also called upon the government to build a memorial polytechnic school at Wiigweng and to provide grants for the education of children of the affected families.

This report, therefore, provides a narrative of key events leading to the massacre based on the testimonies of the survivors and relatives of the victims. The report also looks at developments from 1986 and makes specific recommendations to the government and non-governmental organisations to provide compensation to the survivors of the Namokora massacre address the health consequences of the NRA operation in Namokora and support the formation of a community-based victims support groups.



Survivors of the Namokora massacre participate during JRP consultations, July 2013.

METHODOLOGY

This report came about in response to a call by the community of Namokora for proper documentation of their conflict experiences. A preliminary visit to ascertain the scope of the massacre was conducted by JRP Researchers from 12 to 14 June 2013. During this visit, JRP researchers conducted individual interviews and focus group discussions with survivors of the massacre, relatives of the victims who died and local leaders in the area.

This led JRP to conduct a victims' workshop between the 9 and 11 July 2013 to gain detailed information from the group regarding the events that occurred in each sub-county affected by the massacre. In

this workshop more individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted along with psychosocial education, exercise, memory work and the creation of a time line of events.

On 19 August 2013, JRP researchers participated in the first memorial prayer of the Namokora massacre as an act of solidarity with relatives who lost their loved ones and to gain insight into what happened and what the current needs of victims are.

A follow up and verification process were conducted from the 25 to 27 September, 2013 through a victim's group workshop

to enable the community to clarify JRP findings and dialogue further on points of interest.

As a result of the research process, a total of 78 people were interviewed comprising of 18 female and 60 male respondents. In addition, JRP organised thirteen in-depth individual interviews with 9 males and four females, three focus group discussions (with the relatives of people who died in the massacre, the people who participated in the burial of those who died in the massacre and local leaders and group leaders of the survivors group) and several verification meetings with the community. Respondents were purposively selected with the help of a community mobiliser who was present at the time of the massacre. The respondents were chosen based on their knowledge and experiences of the massacre, and their availability. The respondents who participated were drawn from the Sub-counties of Namokora, Orom, Omiya Anyima, Kitgum Matidi and Omiya Pacua. All interviews were conducted in Luo and subsequently transcribed and translated by JRP researchers.



JRP researchers listen to survivors and relatives of the victims of the Namokora massacre during a workshop held in July 2013.



JRP researchers hold a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the survivors in Namokora.



A Catholic church in Namokora sub-county where civilians were kept in detention before being herded into a lorry by the 35th Battalion of the NRA because they were suspected of being rebel collaborators.

INTRODUCTION

Uganda has witnessed an endless storm of violence born of politics and the hostile tactics often used by political leaders to gain access to power since the 1960's. From President Milton Obote to President Idi Amin, to Tito Okello Lutwa and current president Yoweri Museveni, Uganda has seen each regime embroiled in conflict with opposing rebel groups. This is not a judgment of the governments, past or present, but merely a fact of the turbulent past that the country has gone through. This history of perpetual violence and use of force as a means to gain leadership and power continues to tether Uganda to a narrative of conflict, brutal human rights violations and unrest that plagues the country today.

Located 56 kilometres east of Kitgum town is Namokora, the home of former

President Tito Okello Lutwa. On 19 August 1986, Namokora witnessed a horrible massacre of 71 men and women who were accused by the 35th Battalion of the National Resistance Army (NRA) of being rebels or collaborating with rebels to oust the new NRA government that had overthrown Tito Okello's government seven months earlier.

General Tito Okello became the president of Uganda in July 1985, after Acholi elements in the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), led by Lieutenant General Basilio Okello overthrew the Obote government. His ascendancy to power had occurred at a time when the President Milton Obote II regime had begun to crumble to pressure of NRA insurgency and national unrest from rebel groups operating countrywide. Tito

Okello ruled from July 1985 to January 1986 when he was overthrown by the NRA government led by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

During his rule, General Okello invited several anti-Milton Obote forces to join his government. Prominent among the anti-Obote forces that showed up was the Federal Democratic Movement (FEDEMU), which consisted mainly of ethnic Buganda combatants. Shortly after Okello assumed power, President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya initiated peace negotiations between Okello's regime and NRA forces under Museveni. The peace negotiations resulted into the Nairobi Peace Agreement where it was agreed that a 17 member military council would govern the country and Museveni would serve as a vice chairman under Okello.

Just one month after the conclusion of the Nairobi agreement, the NRA launched an offensive which resulted in the capture of Kampala on 26 January 1986. The overrun UNLA government forces, the majority of whom were ethnic Acholi, retreated to the north of the country. According to respondents, as these UNLA soldiers retreated they warned the civilians that the NRA would massacre the civilian population in revenge for killings perpetrated by ethnic Acholi soldiers in the Luwero Triangle massacre in the early 1980s. The UNLA soldiers urged civilians to flee with them. Some civilians did but the majority remained in their homesteads because they could not make sense of what the soldiers were saying and also because many were not very informed of the developments in Kampala.

While several reports have been written about the atrocities that occurred as a result of the most recent rebel conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), little has been written about the violence that took place in earlier years after the NRA overthrew Tito Okello and the UNLA. Many abuses took place in villages and towns that have gone undocumented. This

report attempts to give voice to some of the people who were victims of atrocities and human massacre that took place in Namokora and its sub-counties in early to mid-1986.

Events preceding the arrival of the 35th Battalion

By December 1985, rumours of a war raging in southern and central Uganda between the NRA and government forces were beginning to reach Namokora, located approximately 56 kilometres from Kitgum Town. Namokora was the home of Tito Okello Lutwa, who was the president of Uganda at that time. Word was that President Okello was arranging for peace talks to take place in Nairobi between his government and the NRA rebels. Before that could occur, on 26 January 1986, the community heard that the UNLA had been overthrown by the NRA and that Yoweri Kaguta Museveni was now the new president of Uganda.

Thousands of the vanquished UNLA soldiers had fled to northern Uganda and then to Sudan for fear that the NRA would take vengeance on them. In pursuit of the rebels, the NRA soldiers were soon sighted in northern Uganda. As they retreated, the UNLA warned civilians that the advancing NRA soldiers would massacre the Acholi people in revenge for killings perpetrated by ethnic Acholi soldiers of the UNLA in Luwero Triangle as they fought the NRA.

People living in Namokora and the surrounding sub-counties reported an initial military presence by the NRA in February 1986. According to several respondents we talked to, in this first appearance the NRA conducted itself in an exemplary and restrained manner and would even play games with community members.

... I used to play football with the soldiers. When we sustained injuries they were the very people who treated us.¹

The revenge which the ex-UNLA soldiers had warned the community about was not the case. Within this period the NRA soldiers became known for their discipline and community outreach and even instituted an ad hoc committee to help oversee the governance of Namokora.² Hearing of these developments, some civilians who had pre-emptively fled their homes to the nearby then southern Sudan began to return home.

Meanwhile during March 1986 ex-UNLA soldiers who had fled to Sudan began to reorganise themselves into an armed insurgency in preparation for launching a counter attack. They formulated plans of attack against the NRA which were to be carried out later that year. The ex-UNLA soldiers organised themselves into various factions such as the Uganda Peoples' Democratic Army (UPDA). It was not long before the UPDA's presence was reported in places such as Pajule, Kilak, Okinga, Agoro and Lukoropwac in northern Uganda.

This information was relayed by NRA commanders in the field to their command headquarters in Kampala. By the time this information reached Kampala, however, it was distorted and the general interpretation was that the Acholi people had risen in revolt against the NRA. As one respondent noted:

[The information that reached Kampala was that the] Acholi have

picked up arms. NRA soldiers came demanding for those guns not knowing that the majority of Acholi people and more especially civilians in the community had no information about this development. NRA began accusing civilians that they are rebel collaborators. Massive arrests of civilians started. Looting began as well.³

This misinterpretation was to lead to the arbitrary arrest and execution of several Acholi people all over the sub-region and Namokora was not spared.

The 35th Battalion occupies Namokora

The first group of NRA soldiers that came to Namokora did not stay long. They continued with their journey towards the border area of Orom, Lukung and Karenga in Karamoja, presumably in search of ex-UNLA rebels. Within two months of the departure of this first group of NRA, the 35th Battalion under Captain Matovu arrived in Namokora and set up their barracks in Namokora Primary School (present day Namokora Vocational Secondary School). Next to the school was a Catholic church which the soldiers turned into a makeshift prison cell where they would eventually detain civilians suspected of being rebel collaborators.

According to the majority of the respondents we talked to, this particular group (the 35th battalion) came for revenge and to suppress any uprising suspected uprising in Namokora and the surrounding areas. They embarked on a mission of identifying alleged rebel collaborators and ex UNLA soldiers. The horror they unleashed upon the civilians of Namokora

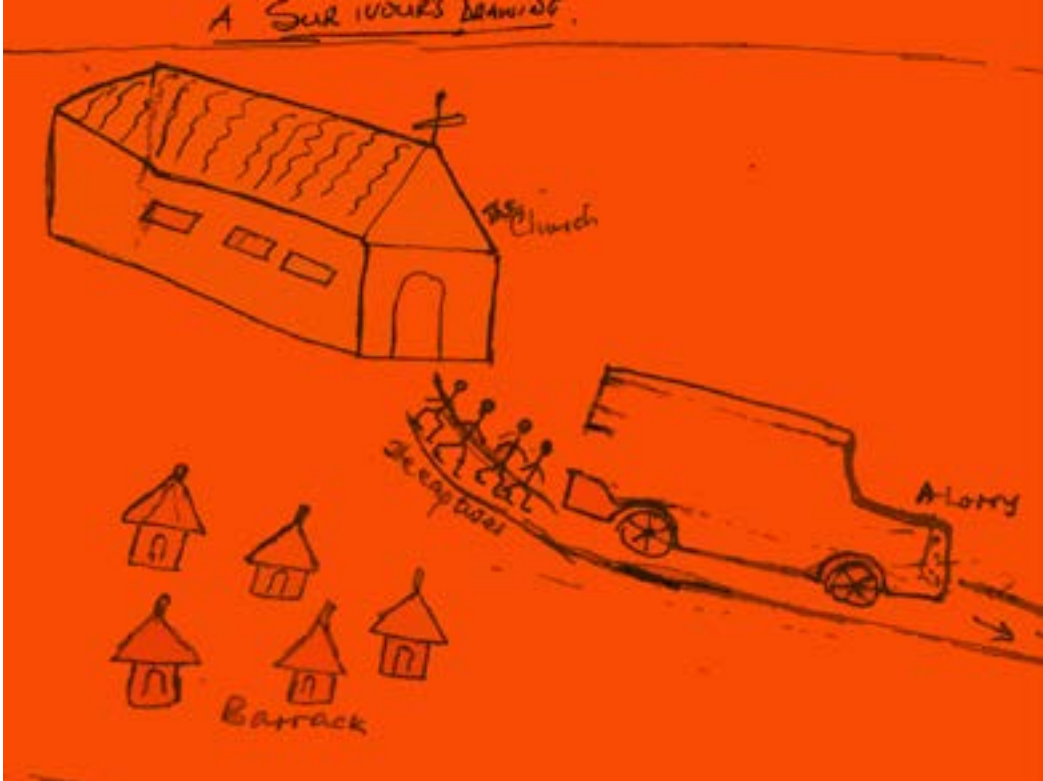
¹ Male respondent in focus group discussion in Namokora, 9 July 2013.

² A governance body was formed by the first group of NRA soldiers around March 1986 to take record of visitors in their areas, build relationship between soldiers and civilians and receive guns the owners of which were afraid to directly hand over to NRA soldiers.

³ Religious leader in Namokora, 19 August 2013.

was beyond anything they had seen before. In addition to carrying out arbitrary arrests and torture upon the civilians, the soldiers also committed sexual and gender based violence upon the civilians; both men and women were targeted. In the words of one respondent, “the soldiers went on rampage for women... any woman, including very old women.”⁴

⁴ Female respondent in Namokora, 13 June 2013



A drawing by a community member of Namokora depicting victims of the attack being loaded onto a truck.

FROM OCCUPATION INTO CARNAGE: THE MASSACRE IN NAMOKORA

Immediately after the soldiers settled in Namokora, their demeanour changed and acts of violence escalated.

*They looted property like cattle, goats, destroyed houses and raped women.*⁵

By July 1986 the situation had become very serious and as a result civilians started evacuating from Namokora and the surrounding villages. While some civilians moved to other places, others resorted to hiding in the bush "because the looting by soldiers was too much and the arbitrary arrests had become very

common".⁶ This situation prevailed and by the first half of August 1986 the situation had worsened. Survivors described the preceding events in the first half of August that eventually culminated into the massacre of 71 civilians on 19th August. Despite the fact that twenty seven years have passed, witnesses interviewed described what happened to them as if it happened yesterday.

The men and women of Namokora and the surrounding sub-counties remember the situation becoming increasingly worse,

⁵ Male focus group discussion, 9 July 2013.

⁶ Interview with a 51 year old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

particularly in the month of August. There was a growing sense of helplessness, as there was no way to protect themselves from these soldiers. Even those who stayed home, out of the soldiers' way, were unable to escape the horror that was to come. The soldiers were like hunters who preyed on the defenceless people, wreaking havoc inside their homes. Soldiers terrorised people indiscriminately as some survivors recall and committed sexual offences against the civilians.

The soldiers came to my home [and] took two goats. When I asked them where they were taking my goats, they gave me no answer. They came over to me and ordered me to lie down on the floor ... then they raped me ... then the soldiers said what they had done was worth the goats I had tried to stop them from taking ...⁷

In addition to the rampage of rape, looting and arrests, the battalion planned and executed an operation to round up suspected rebels and alleged rebel collaborators. From the 15 August 1986 to 18 August 1986 the operation was in full force in Namokora and the surrounding sub-counties of Kitgum Matidi, Lagoro, Orom and Omiya Pacua which happened to be the home village of Tito Okello.

But the crowning event of the whole operation, a day the civilians would never forget, was yet to come. The soldiers settled for the Monday of 18 August 1986, a market day in Namokora, as the day on which several civilians would be rounded up and later massacred. According to eye witnesses and survivors, the events leading up to the massacre started a few days earlier with arrests being carried out by soldiers who divided themselves up into small units and combed the villages and neighbouring sub-counties of Namokora.

⁷ Interview with a 49 year old woman in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

15 August: First arrests are made

It was around 8 am when some people in civilian attire visited our school in Lagoro. One of them had a pistol in his hands. They arrested me moved with me to Kitgum Matidi. Once in Kitgum Matidi, they suddenly told me 'we need twelve guns from you right now'. I was surprised and asked them 'where will I get those guns? I am just a teacher.' They would not listen to me; they undressed me and gave me fifty strokes with a stick. I pleaded with them and asked them to go and consult my parish chief to ascertain whether I was what they were saying I was. After a while an army truck came and we boarded and went to Namokora barracks.⁸

As much as the main operation was scheduled for the 18th August several respondents from sub-counties bordering Namokora confirmed that the operation started prior to the 18th. The arrests begun as early as the 15th of August as seen from the above testimony and were conducted indiscriminately, targeting school teachers, local leaders, elders and youth in the area. In Lupur Primary School in Omiya Anyima sub-county, the operation was also in full force as recalled by a teacher.

As we neared our school in Lajok Ogayo, we started seeing gumbot marks on the ground and orange peels littered all over the place. As we moved towards the school we began to see people's houses wide open and abandoned.⁹

⁸ Interview with a 48 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

⁹ Interview with a 76 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

As this teacher and his colleagues neared the school, eleven NRA soldiers appeared asking to know who they were. The teachers explained who they were, but the soldiers accused them of being rebel collaborators. The soldiers descended upon them and tied them up in a style the locals referred to as 'three piece'¹⁰ before dragging them to an army truck that took the captives to Namokora.

As the 35th Battalion carried out its arrests, they kept harassing the locals to surrender the guns they were allegedly hiding, and give details of their names and confirm whether they were former soldiers or not.

All the arrested civilians were taken to Namokora, which was the central location for detention of all captives. As one civilian recalled:

*When we reached Namokora, we were taken straight to the intelligence office where registration was going on. They would ask for your name and try to establish whether you were once a soldier or not.*¹¹

16 - 17 August: Arrests escalate

By the next morning of 16 August, the situation had gone from bad to worse in places such as Omiya Anyima and Kitgum Matidi. The soldiers continued arresting civilians and bringing them to Namokora for questioning. Those people whose homes were by the road side deserted their homes and sought refuge further away from the roads. Some civilians began to take refuge in the bush as they weighed the situation. Others civilians fell victim to the arrests as they escaped and were brought to Namokora Primary school. In Orom sub-county, the soldiers

¹⁰ Three pieces involved tying up both the wrists and elbows of a captive behind his back.

¹¹ Male interview in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

went to Lalekan and Morongole villages because of their strategic locations. One respondent recalled:

*The soldiers climbed on top of Morongole hill to enable them see where the civilians were hiding in the bush. In Lalekan village, the soldiers killed any civilian they came across. They also continued looting people's property including goats and chicken.*¹²

These incidents created fear and tension within these neighbouring sub-counties of Namokora.

18 August: Auction day - the main arrests begin

The arrests that occurred in the days preceding the 18th of August were simply a harbinger of the massive arrests that were yet to take place.

Early in the morning of Monday, 18 August, the main operation began in Namokora and its neighbouring sub-counties. This being an auction day,¹³ very many villagers had converged in Namokora to shop and restock household necessities. The soldiers split up into many small units and went out into the villages and homes surrounding the trading centre. They also set up road blocks on all the major roads leading to Namokora trading centre to arrest the people who were coming for the market day. All the arrested civilians from Namokora and surrounding villages taken and detained under a big tree in Joska's home in Namokora trading Centre.

After gathering everyone under the tree the soldiers split up into small groups of six and dispersed to search all the houses in Namokora trading centre. One of the

¹² Female respondent in Namokora, 25 September 2013.

¹³ Auction day is a big market day where people from far and near come to trade

survivors whose home was strategic enough managed to witness this search.

I was assigned six soldiers to go with to my house but the commander cautioned me ahead of time that 'you go with these soldiers but if they tell you to enter the house please don't do' ... reaching my home, the soldiers showed me a tree in the compound and commanded me to sit there. From under that tree I was able to see some acts of the soldiers; in one of the homes they got a boy called Onen and began to hit him with a stick. In another neighbour's home, the soldiers got a pregnant woman pounding sim sim. Her name was Filder. The soldiers talked among themselves that they should split open her stomach and remove the baby. When I heard this, I was greatly terrified and could not hold myself anymore, I shouted at them not to do so. In the end the soldiers only poured down the sim sim Filder was pounding and rubbed it on the ground.¹⁴

Some of the victims of this operation happened to be school children who were preparing to go back to school but could not do so because they got caught up in the operation. One of them said:

I was about to leave home for school when I saw soldiers coming. Two soldiers came inside our hut. One of them went to my sister-in-law and began raping her near the fireplace and another one came to me and started sleeping with me near the family grinding stone. They raped us in all the possible ways then left us and

¹⁴ Female interview in Namokora, 13th June 2013,

began looting things from our house.¹⁵

Another woman recalls being startled by the soldiers as they approached her while she was in her garden at home:

It was at about 9 am. The soldiers told me to leave the hoe and come to them. I was scared because I didn't know what they wanted. I moved with them around the villages as they continued arresting other civilians. When we reached the trading centre, they pointed for me where the barrack was and they told me and five other girls to go to the barrack. When I reached the barrack, the soldiers said I was beautiful and would be their wife. I stayed in the barrack for two days and I was raped each day by four soldiers. After the two days the soldiers released us to join the rest of the women at the prison cell.¹⁶

Another survivor was in the middle of a conversation with his brother when the soldiers made an abrupt appearance by the soldiers.

At around 6 pm I was with my brother and he was telling me how he was informed that the junior soldiers of NRA were asking when they could begin the killings in Namokora. Our conversation got interrupted by the abrupt appearance of three NRA soldiers. They arrested both of us and took us to Namokora Primary school.¹⁷

As these arrests and violence was being meted out on the civilians in Namokora, the soldiers continued rounding up people from the surrounding villages and sub-counties. The arrests that began in the wee hours of morning went on until sunset.

¹⁵ Interview with a 42 year old woman in Namokora, 10th July 2013,

¹⁶ Interview with a female in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

¹⁷ Male interview in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

The soldiers also went to Namokora Catholic Mission and forcefully confiscated a white Toyota Pickup that belonged to the Parish priest.

Once the soldiers were done with conducting arrests and searching homes, they gathered all the civilians under a tamarind tree in Namokora trading centre. Several of them tightly guarded the civilians. After a short while, a whistle was blown in the barracks and the soldiers who were guarding the civilians and those who were in the villages looting properties all ran back to the barrack because “the blowing of the whistle was a sign that they are urgently wanted in the barrack”.¹⁸ This paved way for the civilians gathered and those arrested to run away. When the soldiers eventually returned they didn't find civilians and the place was empty. One respondent recalled that the soldiers “immediately started shooting in all directions.”¹⁹

The civilians who were not fortunate enough to escape on this occasion were imprisoned by the soldiers at the Catholic church in Namokora trading centre which they had turned into a makeshift prison.

The cell

After screening, the captives were held in the Catholic church located next to Namokora Primary School, which the soldiers had converted into a makeshift church. One respondent recalls:

*After I gave them my name and told them that I have never been a soldier, the soldiers directed me into the cell (inside the church) where I found six people already being detained.*²⁰

¹⁸ Respondents during verification exercise in Namokora, 26 September 2013.

¹⁹ Male respondent during verification exercise in Namokora, 25 September 2013.

²⁰ Interview with a 48 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

Another survivor narrates his journey to the cell and what he heard the soldiers say:

As soon as we reached Namokora, the soldiers began to brag saying ‘today we have got hold of the real rebels and their commander. Today we have arrested Ojuku. On hearing the name Ojuku the rest of the soldiers ran to the vehicle to see who I was; as I descended from the lorry one of them came with a bayonet and pierced my testicles. We got down and they ushered us into the cell in the Catholic church.’²¹

To some, it was the moment when they got a clue as to why the soldiers were committing these horrendous acts in Namokora.

When I insisted that I was a teacher, the soldiers said, ‘We are meant to understand that all teachers in this place are actually soldiers and every person here from five years on is an armed soldier ... We know the secret of this place.’²²

Many survivors talked about how hard it was to enter the church and cell, “we were beaten with all sorts of instruments that the soldiers had in their hands. Life became hard and unbearable.”²³

Another person who was also involved talks of the confusion that reigned in the church.

People were confused about why they were being detained and what

²¹ Interview with a 76 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

²² Interview with a 48 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

²³ Interview with a 55 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.



The withered leg of a survivor of the attack on Namokora.

*awaited them. Congestion in the cell was so high that once you entered you either had to put your head between someone's thighs or sit squatting.*²⁴

The soldiers also engaged in acts of rape and sodomy with the detainees. A male survivor reported the nasty experience he had in the hands of the soldiers in the cell:

*That very night of the 17th, two soldiers who were keeping watch of our cell called me out. In my heart I thought they were going to kill me but it was beyond that. The soldiers picked me out of the room at about 12 am when everything was quiet and took me by the side of the church and sodomised me in turns. All the two slept with me and it was very painful ... At around 3 am I began to feel intense pain around my scrotum ... The pain became so intense that my entire body shivered. I knew death had surely come my way.*²⁵

²⁴ Interview with a 50 year old man in Namokora, 13 June 2013.

²⁵ Interview with a 76year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

Other than the beating, torture and sexual violations, many respondents talked about the killing of Oyoo, one of the captives who was picked from the cell on the night of the 18th and killed by the soldiers of the 35th Battalion.

*Oyoo's home was near the school where the soldiers staged their barracks, so perhaps the soldiers thought that with all he had witnessed them doing, if he remained alive he would tell the rest of the community.*²⁶

Many of the respondents said that the night of the 18th of August was their worst night.

That night the soldiers started torturing us the prisoners in the church and killed some as well. At times the soldiers would tie the prisoners up on the roof with their heads facing the floor and legs up as a way of torture. The soldiers tortured us with any weapon around. Some soldiers then

²⁶ Interview with a 51year old man in Namokora, 14th June 2013.

started asking the captives to give them money so that they could be set free. I was asked to pay eight hundred thousand because they thought I was a business man. But I did not have it. I was just a farmer. So they continued to me.²⁷

The captives were not even allowed to come out of the church for calls of nature; they were forced to urinate and defecate in the church.

19 August: Into the lorry

We won't survive. I do not know who shall remain to take care of our children. We shall die.²⁸

By 7.30 am on the 19th of August, the captives began to sense danger. The soldiers of the 35th Battalion had become very harsh and brutal towards the 89 men and women who were being held in the cell. Some of the captives were let out of the prison early in the morning and sent on errands like fetching water under tight escort while others who remained began to observe changes in the soldiers' character, as one man recalls:

Unlike in the previous days when some of the soldiers would hand over some cigarettes to the captives, from this morning of the 19th August all that ceased. They even denied us food brought by our relatives... to me this was a sign to show that we were going to die.²⁹

²⁷ Interview with a 55 year old male survivor in Namokora, 27 September 2013.

²⁸ Male respondent in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

²⁹ Interview with a 55 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

The soldiers hurriedly re-registered all the captives again in the morning as they prepared them to board a Lorry.

The soldiers kept saying do not waste our time telling us all the details. Just register your name in the book and go back and wait in the cell. By this time I found eighty eight people already registered before me.³⁰

As the captives finalised with their registration, a red Tata lorry was brought and packed in the school compound. The soldiers formed a column of two lines from the door of the church to where the lorry was stationed, with their guns in hand. Three of the survivors describe to us what followed next:

Immediately after the soldiers had lined up, the commander ordered all of us to come out one by one in a single line. Inside the cell the captives muttered to one another and said 'let's go'. I came out and was closely followed by an old man; we climbed into the Lorry and sat down. Within three to four seconds, we were closely followed by the other captives who scrambled into the lorry amidst serious beatings by the soldiers.³¹

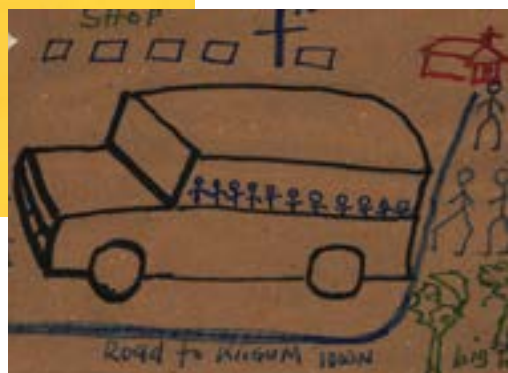
That morning when I returned from fetching water, I was in great pain; I could not bend, I could not do anything else; flies were biting me and the wounds I had sustained from the beatings by the soldiers were giving me no peace either. I asked myself what to do? I wondered whether to run or walk out of the place. By this time people were already lining up to board the lorry. The soldiers came

³⁰ Interview with 41 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

³¹ Interview with a 76 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.



Above: A survivor's depiction of three key events during the Namokora massacre: 1) arrests being made 2) the massacre as it happened 3) skulls of the deceased. Right: A depiction of the Tata lorry in which the captives were piled on top of one another by the NRA soldiers.



after me and beat me until I entered the lorry ... The lorry was so filled up with captives that I could not easily climb. The beating was so severe that I became helpless and confused.³²

The soldiers packed the captives into the lorry with serious beatings. After the lorry was full and the soldiers realised that there was no room, we were ordered to lie on top of each other. This was the time I almost died. I was right at the bottom and other

people piled on me.³³

³² Interview with a 55 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

³³ Interview with a 76 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

The lorry was packed to capacity with captives as it began its journey to an unknown destination, being closely escorted by a pick-up truck loaded with fully armed NRA soldiers.³⁴

There were very many soldiers that entered in the white pick-up with very many guns.³⁵

The two vehicles started driving from Namokora vocational secondary school towards Kitgum road. After driving for about 3 kilometres from Namokora trading centre, fear began to grip most of the civilian captives.

Civilians in the truck started crying and shouting because they didn't know why they were being taken. Many began to discuss what to do because they were not rebels but civilians innocently arrested from in their homes.³⁶

I resigned my life to anything that was to come. I said, 'it is up to them. If I die, I die.'³⁷

In a very precise way I said to my colleagues, 'let's leave all that in God's hands. Let it be unto us as God has planned. There is nothing else we can do.'³⁸

³⁴ This was a pickup looted by the NRA soldiers from the catholic mission in Namokora. According to an insider from the mission, after about three months, UPDA rebels removed the pickup from NRA soldiers during an attack in Lapana and the Church recovered it after many more months in the bush.

³⁵ Interview with a male respondent in Namokora, 13 June 2013.

³⁶ Interview with a 41 year old man, 14 June 2013.

³⁷ Interview with a 57 year old man in Namokora, 13 June 2013.

³⁸ Interview with a male respondent in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

As most of the male captives began to give up the fight for their lives, one female captive called Bwo summoned strange courage and did otherwise.

As the lorry was still moving, there was a woman called Bwo. I think she thought that instead of going to die of gunshots, she would rather jump off the truck and die from there. So she was the first person to jump off from there.³⁹

What Bwo did surprised many of the captives and prompted them to follow her example.

After seeing her jump, the soldiers in the pick-up immediately shot at her with sprays of bullets and started to indiscriminately shoot at the people in the lorry.⁴⁰

This caused panic among the captives, and unable to contain their terror at being shot, many of the captives began to jump off the lorry.

On seeing that people were jumping out of the lorry, the soldiers stopped their pickup truck and started firing sporadically at the fleeing civilians. They jumped off their pick-up and started moving on foot and shooting whoever had jumped off the lorry.⁴¹

This caused very many captives to be killed because "when you jumped from the lorry you would not survive. Very many people even broke their legs and were

³⁹ Interview with a 49 year old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

⁴⁰ Interview with a 49 year old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

⁴¹ Interview with 51 year old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

shot dead".⁴²

The stopping of the pick-up gave chance to some of the captives to survive. As recalled by one survivor:

*I was more or less the last person on the truck. So when the soldiers found that the people were almost finished from the truck, they informed their driver to slow down. That is when I jumped out. I hurt my knees and back. By this time many people were already lying dead. The soldiers were some metres away but their bullets including bombs were still being fired at the civilians.*⁴³

*As we were jumping out of the lorry, the soldiers behind us were shooting at us. Some people died at the main road side because as they jumped, they didn't have energy to run and they were shot dead. Others ran away with injuries into the bush and died from their injuries or from starvation because there was no water and food they could survive on.*⁴⁴

Many of the surviving captives and the other residents of Namokora after hearing the gunshots could not stay in the trading centre any more and could not even to bury their loved ones who had died. Several of them fled to take refuge in the nearby bushes and forests.

When these people were killed, civilians abandoned their homes and took refuge in far away bushes from

*their village.*⁴⁵

*In those days, no people lived in their homes. Everyone took refuge in the bush. Even my own father who came to nurse me after the injury I sustained from Wiigweng didn't come from home but a place called Lumonyen, which is about 11 kilometres away from Namokora where our home was.*⁴⁶

For close to two months bodies of the civilians who were shot by the soldiers as they were being transported in a lorry remained lying by the road side or bushes unattended to. Dogs, vultures and other carnivorous animals feasted on them.

One of the wounded survivors who happened to go back to the scene of the massacre had this to say:

*After jumping from the lorry I got a terrible gunshot wound on my leg but I managed to run into the bush. After some time, I began to crawl back to the main road where the massacre had happened. Bodies lay sprawled all over the place. My intention was for the NRA soldiers to find and kill me as well. I crawled on my buttock. When I got there, dead bodies were littered all over and several dogs were feasting on them.*⁴⁷

⁴² Interview with a 49 year old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

⁴³ Interview with a 41 year old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

⁴⁴ Interview with a 76 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

⁴⁵ A 76 year old man in Namokora, 13 June 2013.

⁴⁶ Interview with a 55 year old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

⁴⁷ Interview with a male in Namokora, 14 June 2013.



Left: A survivor's depiction of people being loaded into the lorry. Below: The lorry.



THE UPDA LAUNCHES A COUNTER ATTACK AND THE 35TH BATTALION DEPARTS FROM NAMOKORA

After the massacre in Namokora, many civilians fled their homes to live in the bushes nearby. Others took shelter at the Catholic mission and were looked after by Father Tarasiscio Luyaramoi and Father Alex Pizzi who provided them with food and water. Within this time, information about what happened in Namokora had spread to the former soldiers in Sudan.

On 28 August 1986, some ex-UNLA soldiers who had formed themselves into the UPDA, a rebel group commonly known as Cilil, unsuccessfully attacked the NRA at Namokora. After one week, they again carried out another attack without any success on 2 September. But the fiercest attack that drove the 35th Battalion out of Namokora happened on 14 September. Fighting began in the morning and lasted up to around 1 pm. There were reports of UPDA attacks everywhere in the neighbouring sub-counties. One man who got caught up in the gunfire as he tried to go to the soldiers to follow up his looted cattle had this to say:

Prior to this attack, the NRA soldiers had gone to my farm in Kalabong and looted my cows. They also tortured the man who was looking after my cows so badly that he died shortly afterwards. So that early morning I had come to the centre to check on my house and perhaps follow up with the soldiers on my looted cows. Shortly after I reached the trading centre, I heard a lot of gunshots everywhere and the people were crying. I tried to run back to the

mission where I was staying but it was impossible.

The NRA soldiers had drawn closer to me as they directed their fellow soldiers to retreat towards Kitgum road. They also fired countless bullets and bombs at the attacking UPDA. Caught between the crossfire, I was forced to retreat with them. As we retreated we passed by the spot where the 71 civilians had been massacred. Their dead bodies were still lying at the scene with very many vultures and dogs eating the dead meat. The stench was too much. Most of the civilians who had gone to the mission were still hiding in the bush.⁴⁸

The journey to Kitgum town that began on the morning of 14 September took the NRA soldiers and the civilians retreating with them several hours. Along the way they survived several ambushes by UPDA as recalled by this respondent:

We started retreating from Namokora in the morning and arrived in Kitgum town at about 11:00pm in the night. On our way with the NRA soldiers, we survived six ambushes by the UPDA at different road junctions such as Omiya Anyima, Pawidi, Kitgum Matidi,

⁴⁸ Male respondent during the verification exercise in Namokora, 27 September 2013.

*Lung Maceto Aparo Primary School and Farm pa Ojara which was some kilometres away from Kitgum town.*⁴⁹

When the soldiers reached Kitgum town, they went straight to the main barracks at the hilltop where it is alleged that some were arrested and taken to prison as punishment for having failed to counter attack the UPDA. It is alleged that some of the arrested soldiers died in prison. As recalled by one man:

*The NRA soldiers I fled with were about twenty in number. When we reached Kitgum, I and two other male civilians were set free to go to local leaders. We left the soldiers behind but later heard that they were arrested and taken to prison where some of them died and others were taken to prisons in Kampala.*⁵⁰

In this particular attack of the 14th September 1986, it is alleged that close to twenty two soldiers died and several others sustained injuries in all the sub-counties where the coordinated attacks by the UPDA were launched. The 35th battalion then fled Namokora abandoning some guns and ammunition.⁵¹



A survivor displays a scar sustained during the attack on Namokora.



A JRP researcher speaks with a female survivor of the Namokora massacre.

⁴⁹ Male respondent during the verification exercise in Namokora, 27 September 2013.

⁵⁰ Male respondent during the verification exercise in Namokora, 27 September 2013.

⁵¹ Interview with a religious leader who was active in Namokora during that time.

AFTERMATH

Burial

Some people suggested that relatives of the dead identify their loved ones using the clothes they wore on the day of the massacre day but it was very difficult. So they came to an agreement that all these people should be buried together since it was difficult to identify the bones.⁵²

The burial of the 71 victims who had been shot in a Tata lorry took place two months after they were massacred. The bodies had been left there after the massacre and had either decomposed or feasted on by dogs and other carnivorous animals. Shortly after the massacre, some brave people had retrieved the bodies of their loved ones and accorded them a decent burial. The majority of the bodies had remained scattered all over the scene until they decomposed. Together with the people Fr. Tarasiscio Luyaramoi, the parish priest of Namokora at the time, came up with the idea of collecting the bones together and giving them a decent burial.

The priest called all the people who lost their relatives and a date for burial was set. The priest then brought for us polythene bags to use for collecting bones and we started collecting the

⁵² Male respondent in the focus group discussion of those who participated in the burial, 10 July 2013.

bones.⁵³

The collection of bones was a very emotional and heartbreaking task. It was further complicated by the fact that the bodies had decomposed and the bones were mixed up. As one respondent recalled:

You would find a person's skeleton lying down with the other body parts scattered; the head in a different position, and the hands or legs missing; then when you picked the different body parts they would not be complete. It was very difficult to match the bones of the many different people as some bones were long while others were short.⁵⁴

Nevertheless the people persevered and collected all the bones together as best as they could. As it was difficult to transport these bodies back to their original homesteads, it was decided that they would all be buried in a mass grave by the roadside. On the designated burial day, everyone who could came to the scene.

The grave was dug, and the priest led a mass before the bones were buried. The grave was about 6 feet deep and

⁵³ Male respondent in the focus group discussion of those who participated in the burial, 10 July 2013.

⁵⁴ Male respondent in the focus group discussion of those who participated in the burial, 10 July 2013.

4 metres wide. All the other body parts were put at the bottom then the skulls placed horizontally over the top of the other bones.⁵⁵

Formation of the Namokora United Relatives of the Massacred and Survivors Association

The burial marked the end of the massacre in Namokora and the beginning of a long process of healing for the survivors. While on one hand they had to cope with traumatic memories of the experiences they had gone through, they also had to pick up the pieces of their lives and move on. This eventually led to the formation of a massacre survivors' association known as the Namokora United Relatives of the Massacred and Survivors Association (NUREMSA).

This association began formally in 2011 when the community of Namokora sub-county and the relatives of those who lost their lives at Wiigweng in Oryang village held a number of meetings at Namokora sub-county headquarters which led to the formation of the association and the election of the LCIII sub-county Chairman as their head.

The association was envisioned as an avenue for seeking redress by the survivors. The association's leadership is comprised of a group of leaders including: the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and sub-county representatives from Omiya Anyima, Orom, Kitgum Matidi, Wol and Namokora.

The association has seven broad objectives:

1. To advocate for peace and reconciliation
2. To work on joint income generating activities to benefit all members
3. To sensitise community on human rights and good governance
4. To advocate for the participation of women and children in political and economic arenas and affairs of the sub-county
5. To advocate for education of the young generation
6. To organise and carry out annual memorial prayers
7. To form a cooperative society for victims

The membership of the association is comprised of survivors and relatives of the victims who died. At the moment the association has 18 survivors of the Wiigweng massacre and 74 relatives of the deceased victims.

Moving forward, on 14 May 2013, through a delegation of Kitgum district leaders who had gone to meet the president of Uganda, the association presented its first position paper proposing a way forward to reconcile with the Government of Uganda on the killing of their loved ones. In the petition, the community informed the president that the relatives of those who lost their dear ones had willingly collected local materials at the site and had built a monument at the mass grave through their own initiative. They invited the president for their first memorial prayer of the 19 August 2013. They also informed the president of the 35th battalion's activities under the command of Captain Matovu and the suffering meted out to the civilians and including the killing of innocent civilians in Namokora sub-county and the surrounding sub-counties like Orom, Omiya Anyima, Kitgum Matidi, Lagoro and Omiya Pacwa.

The first position paper agreed on the

⁵⁵ Male respondent in the focus group discussion of those who participated in the burial, 10 July 2013.

following points:

- They (victims) will not take government to court for the killings, but seek an alternative peaceful means with government in order to end grievances leading to reconciliation and annual memorial prayers in memory of the deceased.
- They humbly requested government to provide some assistance to help the households who lost their relatives and survivors. They requested government to give each household a pair of oxen and ox plough for animal traction, 1 heifer, 2 she goats and 1 he goat for breeding purposes.
- The petition called upon the government to build a memorial polytechnic school at Wiigweng to train the youth on formal and informal business and vocational skills.

After 27 years, on 19 August 2013, the survivors and relatives of those who died at Wiigweng conducted their first memorial prayer. The event was organised by the survivors and relatives of the victims, in conjunction with District Local Government leaders from the different affected sub-counties. It was attended by different Government representatives and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Father Tarasiscio Luyaramoi was the main mass celebrant. He had this to say:

This is a very important day. I thank God that it found me when I am still alive. To me the incident of Namokora made me appear like a shepherd who looked helplessly as his sheep suffered. I will never condone what happened to the people of Namokora. It degraded human dignity. Each and every human life is important. Don't ask God to only have mercy on those who died but pray hard that God grants us the grace

to fight the disunity among the people of Uganda'

Hon. Minister Henry Okello Oryem represented the government during the memorial prayer and said it would do something to redress the crimes committed in Namokora.

On 28 August 2013, after the first memorial prayers, the survivors and relatives of the victims of the Namokora massacre held a review meeting and observed with deep disappointment that the first attempt to submit their petition to the president had failed. They wondered why the president did not attend the prayers despite being invited, and why the government representative who represented the president on the day of the memorial prayer did not give satisfactory feedback to the congregation regarding their petition to the president.⁵⁶

As a way forward, the association resolved to seek a meeting with the president through a delegation of 30 members to hold discussions with him in a peaceful manner and seek the best way to redress the Namokora massacre.



JRP researchers at the temporary monument for the Namokora massacre.

⁵⁶ Partial content of the position paper of the united relatives of the massacred community and the survivors in the hands of the 35th Battalion at Wiigweng in Oryang Village, Pugida West Parish, Namokora sub-county Kitgum District.



Survivors clear the new memorial site for the Namokora massacre, July 2013.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Namokora massacre left a painful and permanent impact on the lives of the people of Namokora and the surrounding sub-counties long after the soldiers of the 35th Battalion had departed and the physical wounds had begun to heal. Many had to rebuild their lives with whatever they had left. Some of the survivors described their fight to survive while they remained in the bush waiting for the soldiers to clear out; then how they returned to empty homes because soldiers had looted their food and few possessions. Many had to cope with painful physical wounds and injuries which often prevented them from working in their fields or engaging in physical labour.

In addition, the frustration and bitterness towards the government which quickly followed the operation has remained in the community for decades and would deeply affect the lives of future generations. As illustrated by a man who escaped from the lorry and stayed in the bush for seven months while also trying to heal his wounds:

Did I call for these things to happen to me? These were misfortunes that befell me. I found myself already caught up in them. There is no way out. I had even vowed in my life not to receive even mere salt from this government. I nursed all my wounds

in the bush. I would spend the entire night crying because of the great pain I was in. A hunter was the one who found me during the time that my brothers were away and was also the same man who cut that flesh that was hanging from my breast after the shooting at Wiigweng.

Nonetheless, after that the government would still come to collect graduated tax from me even after knowing that they caused me disability. Do they care? They knew I could not dig on my own but still required me to pay tax. When I walk for some distance my knee swells.⁵⁷

The constant abuse and torture the men and women were subjected to had severe consequences on their bodies. Men continue to live with the shame of having been sodomised or disabled through beatings. A woman who was raped discusses the trauma and injuries that are still with her today:

Being a young girl then, I was left with a lot trauma due to the rape. I have not told anyone else apart from my aunt and you, not even my husband. My leg that was stabbed by the soldiers with a bayonet still pains up to now. Sometimes I feel a lot of pain that I can't walk. When I went to the hospital, the doctor said that one of the nerves could have been injured. My brother had also been arrested but after he was released he came back home, fell sick and died due to too much torture.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Interview with a 55 year old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

⁵⁸ Interview with a 49-year-old woman in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

Two men explain their strife in trying to provide for their families due to the injuries they sustained during the massacre:

It has affected me in a way that I am still weak. My head still hurts. My back that I hit when I jumped out of the lorry still hurts. I can't ride my bicycle for long. I can't provide for my family substantially. Besides, government has not accorded me any compensation.⁵⁹

My problems are many. I can't move very well or run; I can't dig because of my chest which I injured as I jumped out of that lorry; I can't see very well which is why I am now using glasses, without them I can't write or see during day time when [the sun is] shining.⁶⁰

One of the biggest challenges for most families would be the difficulty of dealing with the loss of family members, in some cases fathers and husbands who were the head of the family. One man expresses the pain he has felt as at the loss of his family:

I have six children and my first born has completed senior four but I can't afford higher education for him so he has joined the vocational school. Both my parents died and we were seven boys and they are all dead. I am now left alone with no one to talk to or even an elder to guide and advise me.⁶¹

It is important to recognise that the grievances felt by the victims of the Namokora massacre cannot be exclusively

⁵⁹ Interview with a 48-year-old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

⁶⁰ Interview with a 51-year-old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013.

⁶¹ Interview with a 49-year-old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013

attributed to the 35th Battalion's actions over two decades ago. Many actors and events have contributed to the suffering of this community throughout the long conflict in northern Uganda. Nonetheless, as evidenced by this field note, the GoU has played a clear role in contributing to the suffering of this community. The Government's acceptance of responsibility for the Namokora operation is thus long overdue.

When asked what recommendations the survivors would make to the government, one man who was raped by the soldiers and had his testicles pierced by a bayonet said:

I do not know how to best explain this. When I am riding on a bicycle, sometimes I feel as though my head is heavier than the rest of the body. When I lie down, I feel a lot of pain on the side of my body that was beaten and pierced. My scrotum still pains to date. At one point I was tempted to think these soldiers had destroyed my testicle because at that time. When I drank water, I would take it through my mouth and the water would pass out through my testicles. Right now I am weak. On some days when I go digging and feel the sharp pain on the scrotum I just abandon digging and come home. Sometimes I feel the urge to urinate, but when I go to urinate I take long without the urine coming.

I need medical support and probably the government should build for me a house because I am unable to now. Right now I have nine children I'm taking care of at my home. These are mainly my late brother's children and the daughters' children.⁶²

62 Interview with a 76-year-old man in Namokora, 10 July 2013.

Another man thinks about the young people who were not alive for the massacre, but who are affected by its aftermath today:

The government should be considerate and help the survivors and victims. They should look at our children who are also suffering from the effects of the same incident and think of what to do for the people. This will help us to heal and foster reconciliation with the government. If this does not happen we will still look at the government with a lot of anger just simply because we don't have the capacity to fight back. Like for me, I lost my relatives in the massacre."⁶³

The following recommendations seek to build on the current needs and perceptions of those affected by the operation in Namokora.

To the Government of Uganda (GoU)

Proper compensation needs to be given to the victims and their families as a result of their suffering. As evidenced by the victims' accounts, the significant aftermath of this military operation has deeply affected their lives for decades after. A desire for proper compensation and reparation by the Ugandan Government for the suffering and damages caused by the military operation remains highly relevant. Any reparations scheme should go beyond merely monetary payments to survivors, and should seek to address a whole set of social needs existing within the community as part of the legacy of this operation. However, before any type of payment for compensation or reparations can take place, consultations need to be

63 Interview with a 49-year-old man in Namokora, 14 June 2013

carried out with community members. There are mixed opinions with regards to what counts as proper reparations, thus community-wide discussions need to be carried out to come to a consensus.

The President of Uganda should give audience to the delegates of the Namokora massacre association for a dialogue leading to reconciliation and reparation. Since 14 May 2013, the survivors and relatives of the victims of Namokora massacre have been trying to seek audience with the president over their plight, but they have received no tangible feedback. On 28 August 2013, after the first memorial prayers, the survivors and relatives of the victims of the Namokora massacre held a review meeting and observed with deep disappointment, that the first attempt to submit their petition to the president had failed.

As a way forward, the association resolved to seek a meeting with the president through a delegation of 30 members to hold discussions with him in a peaceful manner, and seek the best way to redress the Namokora massacre.

To civil society organisations and GoU

There is a clear and present need for the proper memorialisation of the Namokora massacre to take place. The community members have already built a monument in place, but additional support needs to be given to ensure that the monument is furnished with all the needful details such as names of the victims and a fence. There should also be financial support to the association to enable it conduct the annual prayers.

Support must be given to the formation of community based victim support groups. The multiple discussions which informed this field note proved to be significant for many community members.

These meetings contributed to the formation of a public space in which the community members were able to share their own individual accounts and talk about how the aftermath of this operation has affected their lives. There currently exists the victims group composed of those who were victims to and survivors of the massacre. Stakeholders should support such initiatives which play a key role in the psychosocial recovery of many victims still coping with the haunting memories of their ordeal.

Government and civil society need to address the health consequences of this operation and support the community with accessible and affordable health care. Virtually every person we interviewed suffered from ongoing health issues resulting from this operation. There are those whose injuries at the time rendered them disabled, for example the man who had to have part of his leg removed. Others have continual pain rendering them unable to work from injuries that never healed correctly and never received treatment.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF THOSE KILLED BY THE 35TH BATTALION FROM NAMOKORA AND SURROUNDING SUB-COUNTIES IN KITGUM DISTRICT, NORTHERN UGANDA

S/N	Name of the Deceased	Village	Parish	Sub county	Representatives	Home district
1	Okot yesaloni (the first RC to be elected)	Agotatgot	Pugoda East	Namokora	Opere Churchill Apire, Okot Uthant	Kitgum
2	Ocaya Joshua	Kweyo	Pagwok	Namokora	Rev. Alex Candwong .O., Acaye	Kitgum
3	Nyeko Ben	Kakoo	Pagwok	Namokora	Charles Hannington Opera, Charles S. Onen	Kitgum
4	Odur Nekanori	Kako	Pagwok	Namokora	Otukutipo Gabriel, Akidi Victorina	Kitgum
5	Adide Nixon	Ladwogi	Pagwok	Namokora	Achayo Yasinta, Ochaya Richard	Kitgum
6	Chrispino longweny	Kalabong	Kalabong	Namokora	Okweira Sisto	Kitgum
7	Lakulawayia	Central Guda	Pugoda East	Namokora	Oyoo Benad, -Komakech Geoffrey	Kitgum
8	Odida Joshua Owori Achaye Justino Olanya	Guda	Pugoda East	Namokora	Ochola Alex, Lapampam, Olanya	Kitgum
9	Oyoo Charles	Kako	Pagwok	Namokora	Charles Achaye	Kitgum
10	Ocire Anthony	Kako	Pagwok	Namokora	Odoki Julio	Kitgum
11	Atube William odayo	Kako	Pagwok	Namokora	Akelo Cecilia	Kitgum
12	Olanya Richard	Kalabong Central	Kalabong	Namokora	Odoki Julius	Kitgum
13	Okeny Alfred	Kweyo	Pagwok	Namokora	Akelo Cecilia, Okot Ben	Kitgum
14	Ochan Hannington –teacher	Kweyo	Pagwok	Namokora	Lagudu Poline	Kitgum
15	Oboto Bosco	Kweyo	Pagwok	Namokora	Auma Dorine, Omara Godfrey	Kitgum
16	Nyeko Moses	Nyapeya. A.	Pagoda West	Namokora	Akulu Christine	Kitgum
17	Okwir Binayo –Catechist	Kweyo	Pagwok	Namokora	Ochola John, Laboi Santa	Kitgum
18	Achola Evaline Bwo	Kakoo	Pagwok	Namokora	Odur Lamton, Ojok Milton	Kitgum
19	Amona Alex	Kweyo	Pagwok	Namokora	Hannington Opira, Charles S. Onen	Kitgum
20	Obote Jackson	Oryang	Pugoda West	Namokora	Oyet Robert, Tolit Churchill	Kitgum
21	Adong Hellen	Kako	Pagwok	Namokora	Okello Max, Obol Donato	Kitgum
22	Okello Joseph	Odilang	Pagoda East	Namokora	Aluta Alfred Oryema. Achayo	Kitgum
23	Ali Livingston	Kakoo	Pagwok	Namokora	Getrude	Kitgum
24	Ochaya Gasparo	Kalabong Central	Kalabong	Namokora	Olanya Micheal	Kitgum
25	Otika Patrick	Kweyo	Pella	Omyia Anyima	Obbo Christopher, Okello Sunday	Kitgum
26	Okello Martin	Kweyo	Panyum	Omyia Anyima	Angoma	Kitgum
27	Ochaya Juliano	Bardyang	Akobi	Omyia Anyima	Rose Acaye, Akaka Albert	Kitgum
28	Otto Marshal (H/M- Teacher)	Palameny Central	Pelwo	Omyia Anyima	Oryema Titus, Abura Erovania	Kitgum
29	Okidi John	Kweyo	Akobi	Omyia Anyima	Akelo Nekolina, Omal Denis	Kitgum
30	Opot kaisto	Kenya west	Akobi	Omyia Anyima	Komakech Patrick, Okot Ben	Kitgum
31	Otto Lawrence E. Okono	Bardyang	Akobi	Omyia Anyima	Okidi Ventorina, Nataliya Apiyo	Kitgum
32	Okello Sezi Lomeari	Wilcere	Pella	Omyia Anyima	Omony Peter, Odong Paul	Kitgum
33	Oryema Jackson	Pella kweyo	Pella	Omyia Anyima	Okot John, Olwoch Alex	Kitgum
34	Nyeko Alfred	Aliaka	Pelwo	Omyia Anyima	Oling Leonard	Kitgum
35	Odwar Sivriano	Akobi	Pella	Omyia Anyima	Lakot Rose Ochaya	Kitgum
36	Logut Jeremio	Wilcere	Pella	Omyia Anyima	Canwat Gilgert davy	Kitgum
37	Ochaya Donasiano	Lalekan	Kiteny	Orom	Olanya Alfred	Kitgum
38	Lakot Sivia Otim	Aiulu	Kiteny	Orom	Okeny Oris Lawino Evaline	Kitgum
39	Okeny Matia	Palubur B	Kiteny	Orom	Lakot Nekolina	Kitgum
40	Abwoyo Tekela	Lukoropwac	Kiteny	Orom	Akech Pirimina, Kilama David	Kitgum
41	Ociti Bosco	Lalekan	Kiteny	Orom	Ochaya	Kitgum
42	Justino Luywee	Palubur A	Kiteny	Orom	Otim Rostiko	Kitgum
43	Opio Largo	Lalekan E	Kiteny	Orom	Todera John Acellam	Kitgum
44	Okura Peter	Palubur A	Kiteny	Orom	Oyoo Vincent Oryema	Kitgum
45	Ongwech Alfred	Lalekan Central	Kiteny	Orom	Odwar Martin	Kitgum
46	Odwar Eroplano	Lalekan C	Kiteny	Orom	Omya Gastoni	Kitgum
47	Ochola Milton	Tegot	Kiteny	Orom	Okello Mario, Kidega John	Kitgum
48	Opiyo Ventorino	Pakumu Jangyat	ibakara	Kitgum Matidi	Auma Josephine, Komakech	Kitgum
49	Obwona George	Pakumu Jangyat	ibakara	Kitgum Matidi	Terence	Kitgum
50	Adoch Alice	Pakumu Jangyat	ibakara	Kitgum Matidi	Otto Maraiana, Okema Sisto	Kitgum
51	Akelo Adule	Pakumu Jangyat	ibakara	Kitgum Matidi	Akena Victoria, Akun Tereja	Kitgum
52	Oriaga Laweri	panwec Alango	ibakara	Kitgum Matidi	Ochola Alfred Ameny	Kitgum
53	Adiwo Josephine	panwec alango	ibakara	Kitgum Matidi	Acire Nelson, Komakech Denis	Kitgum
54	Omwony Narea	Pawel	Laita	Omyia Pacwa	Onen Francis, Opio Charles	Kitgum
55	Adong silibirina	Lawiye oduny	Lakwo	Omyia Pacwa	Onen Francis, Opio Charles	Kitgum
56	Okech yasinto	Coodong	Lojim	Omyia Pacwa	Langoya Patrick, Okello Simon	Kitgum
57	Alfred Anonga	Lojim	Lojim A	Omyia Pacwa	Ojara Alfred, Nyeko Mark	Kitgum
58	Obura Baka	Pawel	Laita	Omyia Pacwa	Opio Grace Omwonyia, Olweny Sisto	Agago
59	Ludwai Juliano	Lacekoto	Laita	Omyia Pacwa	Kagwa Charles, Ocan Micheal	Agago
60	Owon Peter	Kato	Lojim	Omyia Pacwa	Okello Bosco	Agago
61	Oloya Akung	Coodong North	Lojim	Omyia Pacwa	Opiyo Alfred	Agago
62	Ocaya Amnon	Owic	Ogole	Wol	Adwa Angeta	Agago
63	Onyango John	Owic	Ogole	Wol	Opio Nicholas	Agago
64	Ocen Christopher	Dago Pany	Guda	Wol	Ojara Quinto	Agago
65	Onying Jamesi	Olekwire	Motta	Wol	Owon Peter, Otim Bosco	Agago
66	Okello Tony Peter		Pacwa	Mucwini	Rev. Charles Okello, Olega	Agago
67	Okello Bosco	Lakwele okato	Pacwa	Mucwini	Nasaneri.	Agago
68	Cirlo Oketta	Oryang ojuma	Oryang	Amida	Ojera Lukok Alex, Otto Tarasisto	Agago
69	Owiny Elvis – Teacher	Ladinge		Adilang	Ongom Charles	Agago
70	Richard Odora	Kweya	Pella	Omyia Anyima	Nyeko Thomas, Lawino Narasiter	Agago
71	Okwera Matayo	Lukuro Pwac	Kiteng	Orom	Ohekigi M. Mario	Kitgum
72	Opee Kocam	Agago	Mura	Wol	Oyoo George	Kitgum

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF SURVIVORS OF 35TH BATTALION ATTACK ON NAMOKORA AND SURROUNDING SUB-COUNTIES IN KITGUM DISTRICT, NORTHERN UGANDA

S/N	Name of the survivors	Village	Parish	Sub-county	Torture/impairment inflicted	Home district
1	Okidi Vantorino	Palameny	Palwo	Omiya Anyima	Injured, disabled	Kitgum
2	Oryema Jackson	Kweyo	Pagwok	Namokora	Injured, disabled	Kitgum
3	Akena James	Barjere	Pugoda East	Namokora	Injured, disabled	Kitgum
4	Arop Nelson	Ladwogi	Pagwok	Namokora	Injured, disabled	Kitgum
5	Canokema Massimine	Guda	Pugoda East	Namokora	Injured	Kitgum
6	Amone David	Oryang	Pugoda west	Namokora	Injured, disabled	Kitgum
7	Achola Alice	Kakoo	Pagwok	Namokora	Gang raped, infertile	Kitgum
8	Oyaka E Jalon	Kweyo	Pella	Omiya Anyima	Injured, disabled	Kitgum
9	Okwera John	Kweyo	Pella	Omiya Anyima	Injured, disabled	Kitgum
10	Lakot Dorine	Kweyo	Pella	Omiya Anyima	Raped	Kitgum
11	Akun Tereja	Lalekan C	Kiteng	Orom	Raped	Kitgum
12	Okello Keneth	Raaokun	Lakwor	Lagoro	Injured, disabled	Kitgum
13	Abalo Agnes	Logum A	Pagwok	Namokora	Raped	Kitgum
14	Apio Grace Omwony	Pawel	Laita	Omiya Pachwa	Raped	Agago
15	Atemo Christine	Kakoo	Pagwok	Namokora	Gang raped	Kitgum
16	Laluru Margret	Kakoo	Pagwok	Namokora	Raped	Kitgum
17	Atto Vantorina	Oryang	Pugoda West	Namokora	Raped	Kitgum
18	Ladur Rosalba	Oryang	Pugoda West	Namokora	Raped	Kitgum
19	Ayaa Dorine	Obolkome	Palwo	Omiya Anyima	Raped	Kitgum
20	Oyet Atanasio	Pella	Pella	Omiya Anyima	Injured	Kitgum
21	Okutu Ernesto	Laluluru	Pella	Omiya Anyima	Injured	Kitgum

Namokora is located 56 kilometres east of Kitgum town and is one of the sub-counties that frequently come up when there are discussions or debates regarding state orchestrated abuses in northern Uganda. On the 19th of August 1986, the 35th Battalion of the National Resistance Army (NRA) allegedly massacred up to 71 men and women from Namokora and other surrounding sub-counties in a lorry at Wiigweng in Oryang village, and Namokora sub-county. These men and women were accused of being rebel collaborators and/or having plans to oust the newly formed NRA government in Kampala.

Herded into the lorry, over 89 civilians found themselves being piled onto each other with hardly any space as they were driven to an unknown destination while being closely followed by a white pickup filled with armed NRA soldiers. After driving for about three kilometres, they were indiscriminately shot at, resulting in the death of 71 men and women and the injury of scores of others. Since burials did not happen immediately after the shooting most of the bodies were feasted on by dogs and other beasts within that area.

This report provides narratives of key events leading to the Namokora massacre of 1986 based on the testimonies of survivors and relatives. It also looks at developments in that community from 1986 to date and makes specific recommendations to the government and non-governmental organisations to provide compensation to the survivors of the massacre, to address the health consequences of the NRA operation in Namokora and to support the formation of a community based victims support groups.



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