



Forgotten Victims

Recounting Atrocities
Committed in Odek
Sub-County by the
LRA and NRA

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JRP Field Note 21, November 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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Acronyms

GoU	Government of Uganda
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LDU	Local Defence Unit
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRA	National Resistance Army
RC	Resistance Councils
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Front
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UPDM/A	Uganda People's Democratic Movement/Army
WFP	World Food Programme

Introduction

For two decades of violent conflict spanning 1986 to 2006, northern Uganda faced a severe humanitarian crisis. The armed confrontation between the rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the state forces of the Government of Uganda (GoU) had its greatest impact on the civilian population: over 1.8 million people became internally displaced persons (IDP) living in camps, an estimated of 38,000 children were abducted to serve as soldiers or sex slaves, while hundreds of thousands of lives and property were lost. Northern Uganda still struggles to recover from this painful part of its history.

After the cessation of the violence, documenting events that occurred during the conflict became a necessary task to undertake in order to shed light on how the violence affected victims' lives and develop responses for redress. Local and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), along with actors of the international community, have played a key role in this process. However, as in most conflicts in which civilians become a target, stigmatisation and fear of retaliation often make some communities invisible in the eyes of these actors. One community that has been victim of such "invisibilisation" is Odek.

Odek is a village in northern Uganda named after the stream which runs across its territory. Like many other communities in northern Uganda,

abductions, rebel attacks, torture from both government and rebel soldiers, and sexual violence became part of the daily life of the community for many years. Between 1986 and 2004, both the LRA and the government forces, first known as the National Resistance Army (NRA), and later the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), disrupted the life of the community and undermined its economic and social capital through various attacks and military operations.

This, however, is not what most people know about Odek. Instead, in the popular narrative, Odek is known as the community that engendered the leader of the LRA rebellion, Joseph Kony, and as the place where the LRA initiated its first steps in the fight against the government. By virtue of it being the ancestral home of Kony, and its proximity to the famous Awere Hills – the place where Kony in company with LRA soldiers went to pray and renew their spiritual powers to fight against the government – Odek endured an almost constant military presence of the LRA and the NRA, often turning its communities into battlegrounds. Odek is an example of a community that has suffered greatly but has been excluded from several transitional justice interventions, in spite of having to confront the post-conflict challenges and continued re-stigmatisation.

Community members of Odek feel that they have been silent and invisible

for too long. As documented in this report, they have tremendous individual and collective memories of violence, massacres, torture, abductions, and displacements. Additionally, the community feels that the history of the sub-county has been told by outsiders, often obscured by the shadow of Kony and the LRA. Little effort has been made to document Odek's history, and why the LRA found its roots there.

This Field Note is structured in three sections. The first section outlines the narratives of the community pertaining to Kony's life in Odek, how and why he started a war against the government, and the role of the community in the inception of the LRA. The second section documents the military operation led by the NRA in 1988 in Odek, called Operation Fagia, followed

by a description of the narratives of the victims of the massacre led by the LRA in 2004 against Odek camp. This section also gives special attention to specific forms of victimisation and re-victimisation that took place in Odek between 1986 and 2004, such as looting, abductions, sexual violence, torture and psychological violence and the experience of encampment, and how such victimisation affects the lives of individuals in the present. The third section describes the current impact of the 'perpetrator' image on Odek as well as other post conflict needs and concerns of the community. Finally, the report provides conclusions and recommendations to policy-makers and local, national and international NGOs to address the challenges that Odek faces after the cessation of the violence.

Methodology

This report came about in response to the community's call for proper documentation of their experiences during the conflict many of whom feel they have been silent and invisible for too many years and wish to break the silence and stigma that surrounds their community. This concern was expressed to JRP during a preliminary fact finding visit on Friday September 13, 2013 as part of an assessment of the community's indicators of peace and safety.

The first data collection phase for this Field Note was conducted between 27 and 30 January 2014. Within this period, the research team interfaced with different categories of victims, as well as local, cultural and opinion leaders. Deliberate efforts were also made to

reach out to the close members of Kony's family as well as teachers from Odek Primary School whose pupils suffered in the conflict. The views of women and youth were given adequate considerations in the process of data collection. During this period, survivors and relatives of the victims were identified with the help of community mobilisers. Individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to establish the chronology and the facts of the events that took place in Odek. A follow up process took place from 22 to 25 April 2014 and a verification visit was conducted from 10 to 12 September 2014, where the first draft of this report was shared with Odek community members for feedback and further edits.

As a result of the research process a total of 68 people were interviewed, encompassing 22 female and 40 male respondents and 6 key informants comprising of 2 female and 4 male. In addition, JRP researchers organised four focus group discussions and verification meeting with the community. Most of these respondents were identified with the assistance of local community leaders who had knowledge

of who could best assist the research process. Respondents gave informed consent for their interviews to be used in the creation of this Field Note. All interviews were conducted in either English or Luo, and were subsequently transcribed and translated by JRP researchers.

Odek's Account of Kony's Life and the Origins of the LRA

In much of the discourse surrounding the conflict in northern Uganda, Odek is infamous for being the place where Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA, was born. Similarly, the stories about his life and how he started his rebel movement still remain fresh in the memories of the people of this small village in northern Uganda. As a result of this connection, Odek has consistently been blamed for supporting Kony in his fight against the Government of Uganda.

Joseph Kony originates from a clan and village called Palaro Bolo in Odek. His mother and other relatives were allegedly witchcraft practitioners which, presumably, had an impact on his spiritual life. Friends that studied with Kony at school characterise him as a dancer and as “*layela*” (someone difficult or cheeky). According to them, he was very vulgar in his choices of words: “He would abuse you and laugh at you after.” Many of them said he repeated several classes while at school. However, others said that Kony was often targeted by other children:

During our days in Odek Primary School, the pupils used to disturb and beat him up a lot, and he would run

and jump into the water source at the bridge. The pupils would follow him into the water to fight him, and we his friends used to also dive into the water to save him as we would suffocate the other pupils into the water.¹

According to Odek legend, Kony started his war against the government as a result of a call of the spirits. He was “forced” by the spirits to become a witchdoctor and, after some time, he disappeared into the wilderness of Awere hills for three days, presumably guided by the spirits. Upon his return, on the 21st of September of 1986, what the community commonly name as his first spiritual attack, he was singing Christian hymns and denouncing witchcraft. At that time, twenty seven rebel groups had emerged to fight the government of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni which took power the 26th of January of 1986 after the overthrow of General Tito Lutwa Okello, who six months before ousted Milton Obote's regime. In fact, it has been reported a total of twenty seven different rebel groups emerged to

¹ Interview with a former classmate of Kony, 25 April 2014.

resist the new government in Kampala. At the time soldiers affiliated with previous governments fled to northern Uganda with some regrouped forming the Uganda People's Democratic Movement/Army (UPDM/A) which was locally known as Cilil (which means "go and report" to let the government know, exaggerate the stories about our presence) and Olum Olum (people from the bush).

Likewise, former soldiers from the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLA) army that led to the overthrow of Idi Amin's rule and later fell under the command of Milton Obote and Tito Okello also fled north fearing Museveni's revenge for the events that took place at the Luwero Triangle. Also, the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) led by Alice Lakwena (*lakwena* is an Acholi word for messenger), was showing significant results in its fight against the government forces and received strong support from the locals, largely due to the Christian and Acholi belief that Lakwena deliberately used in her fight against Museveni's rule, which also Kony used to frame his rebellion.

During Kony's first spiritual attack he called for a meeting with his relatives and other community members. At the meeting, the spirits explained the reasons why they were manifesting and confirmed what most people in northern Uganda feared when Museveni took power. According to a community member who participated

in the meeting "the spirits identified the new government, which had come to power, was coming to fight and kill the people of Acholi, so the spirit was now commanding Kony to go and fight for his people."

A woman who also participated in the meeting took notes on what the spirits said through Kony. According to her, first the spirits identified who they were by saying names and countries of origin. Then they described the previous wars in which they fought and how they were killed, and asserted that each of them had a role to play in the war that Kony was about to start. The notes, to which JRP had access, were verified by community members who were present on the day of the meeting. The information below reflects a direct quotation of the notes taken by the woman (the places, events and dates are presented as exactly as they are written, see Figure 2, page 6).

According to the notes, after each spirit introduced themselves they asserted: "even if our bodies are rotten our spirits are still alive and have returned in form of the 'Holy Spirit' and all the six of them have met as one spirit to search for that one person who has a clean heart". The spirits said that they had travelled to various mountains in order to increase their power. Since they did not find a mountain in their country they decided to come to Uganda. They went to Mount Moroto, Rwenzori Mountain, and Mount Elgon (all these are mountains located in Uganda), but no one welcomed them.

Figure 2: Notes taken by woman who participated in Kony's first meeting

Chairman Juma Oris from South Africa: The spirit identified himself as a soldier who fought in the World War II and said that he was killed near the Red Sea on the 27th of August of 1959. The spirit concluded saying that he died "like a real man fighting for his country."

'Who are you' from Singapore: This spirit said he was an intelligence officer during World War I, and his role was to spy on the enemy. He died on the 6th of April of 1945 near a mountain called "Abayo" and added that he died for his country and now he has returned as a "holy spirit".

Dr. Mazillan from West Germany: This spirit said he served as a soldier but that his role was mainly to supply medicine to injured soldiers near the Blue Nile in Sudan. The spirit explained how he died: "As I was taking medicine for my colleagues in the battle field, then I came around to the Blue Nile to drink water unfortunately, the rebels were also there hiding (...) so they captured me, cut me into pieces and threw my body into the Blue Nile." He told the people that he died for his country West Germany in 1859.

Jingbriki from Britain: This spirit said he joined the army at the age of 23 to fight for his country during World War I in 1924 because, according to what the spirit said through Kony, "I could not sit down and see another country fight my fellow countrymen." As a result, the spirit said that between the years 1929 to 1936 "when the war was so serious, he was killed for his country and for his God."

Mama Sinisind from Italy: This spirit explained that she was a female soldier who fought for her country. She joined the army in 1831 at the age of 23 and fought until the 21st of November of 1859 when she was killed around "Malimala Mountain", and during an armed confrontation in this place she was captured, raped and killed.

Mama Mary from Switzerland: The spirit said she was a soldier in South East Asia who joined the army to avenge the death of her brother who was killed by the soldiers. The spirit continued explaining "because I was a good soldier, I was made to command battalion 13 during World War II in 1899 as we were fighting near the Indian Ocean the rebels bombed us and I died."

The spirits continued the story saying:

A white dove sat on the shoulder of chairman Juma Oris and it flew away. Juma Oris followed the white dove and we all followed chairman Juma Oris up to Awere Hill.

In Awere Hill they found a river which had a picture of a heart shape and a cross in the middle, a white table cloth

with a picture of the sign of a cross in the middle, a white gumboot and a *kanzu* (a type of dress worn by men white in colour).

Then, the spirits demanded through Kony a white dove, a white plate, a white *kanzu*, a white glass, and a certain type of tree that had red seeds and flowers, as he waited for the next instruction from his spirits. It is not clear how much

time passed after this event but it is said that later Kony went to the top of Odek hill, dressed in a white *kanzu* and that everything he was carrying was white, the cloths, cups and plates.² It is also said that Kony asserted that “he will select the stones from the hill which he will throw and it will explode with fire”.³ A respondent described what happened upon Kony’s return from the hill:

Kony returned home and recruited eight people as they sang the song “Polo Polo Yesu Olara” (a common Christian song). People in the villages gave him moo yaa (shea butter), foodstuff and mothers gave him their daughters and lar kwach (leopard skin) because he was to leave in three days.”⁴

Later Kony called for yet another meeting announcing that he was ready to go to the front line. According to a respondent, Kony randomly pointed at two six-year-old girls and asked the elders to take each of the girls to a separate location and ask them from where the war should start. In the end, both the two girls responded Gulu. On the 1st of April of 1987, Kony along with the eight people and without a single gun left Odek for Gulu.⁵

Kony and his group of eight people lined up and tied ropes with crucifix on their necks as they sang. Several community members joined them [and] after two days when Kony had reached Lalogi, mothers started following them to Lalogi to pick their daughters and sons but the children

refused to return home.”⁶

A few days later, he met a group of former UNLA soldiers from the Black Battalion in Cwero whom he managed to recruit. Eventually, rebels who defected from the UPDM/A and the HSM also joined Kony.⁷ Throughout the journey, Kony and his followers were guided by the spirits in him⁸. He started organising his army by selecting what he called ‘technicians’ and ‘controllers’, who would be in charge of working in the yard and controlling the front line. They were anointed with oil from a *yaa* (shea nut) tree and trained by Kony in the spirits’ system of fighting. In Cwero they had their first confrontation with government soldiers:

When the group enlarged and emerged from Cwero, the government soldiers attacked them. However when Kony threw his stones, it would blast out fire and kill so many government soldiers.”⁹

According to people from Odek, several years after Kony and his rebels had left, he was quiet for a long time, but from the early 1990s he would often go to pray at Awere Hill in order to “get more spiritual power and collect the water from the hill which allegedly also had power.”¹⁰

Kony himself used to come back to Odek to pick his water and stones but no one would see him and the home people would start running not knowing what was happening but

2 Interview with a female respondent in Odek on 22 April 2014.
3 Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.
4 Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.
5 Interview with a male respondent on 24 April 2014.

6 Interview with a male respondent on 24 April 2014.
7 Finnström, S. (2008). Living in *Bad Surroundings: War, History, and everyday Moments in Northern Uganda*. Duke University Press: London.
8 Interview with a male respondent in Odek on 28 January 2014.
9 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.
10 Interview with a male respondent in Odek on 28 January 2014.

*Kony would remain around. That is why Kony went out to fight; left Odek and the people who remained there were killed innocently.*¹¹

Behind the spiritual motivations that led Kony to form the LRA, however, there were other motivations that played out and made some members of the community to support Kony and follow him. According to a respondent, “Kony’s spiritual attacks started at the time when Tito Okello was overthrown from power and the Acholi people were scared.”¹² For most Acholi, as explained above, the overthrown of Tito Okello meant that the new government would take revenge of the Acholi people as alleged by fleeing ex UNLA soldiers.

The events that followed Museveni’s rise into power confirmed such fears. At that time Odek, like many other communities in northern Uganda, experienced several forms of violence, witnessed their houses being set fire and had their livelihoods destroyed in the hands of the government’s NRA forces in their search for Tito Okello’s former soldiers.¹³ During the 2006 LRA-GoU peace negotiations, Kony himself referred to the violence experienced in northern Uganda when Museveni took power:

*What has happened, Museveni came to our place, or to my home, and killed my fathers, killed my sister, destroying all property of my fathers and some other people also, and burned the houses, did many bad things. That is why most of our people also they went in the bush.*¹⁴

11 Interview with a male respondent, 24 April 2014.

12 Interview with a respondent in Odek, 25 April 2014.

13 Verification Questionnaire, p. 1.

14 Green, M. (2008), *op. cit.*

When asked about the veracity of Kony’s above statement during JRP’s verification visit, Odek community members agreed. One respondent recalled how difficult those days were:

*We suffered in the hands of the government soldiers who would come in search of the former soldiers of General Tito Okello and also burnt our houses. We also suffered in the hands of the Karamojong who took away our cattle.*¹⁵

What people in Odek describe as “massive killings of people” during this time was just the precursor to the massacres and suffering that were to come in the following years for this community.

What the spirits said through Kony caused a sense of hope among Odek community members, as expressed by a respondent:

*When the people got to know that Kony was also possessed, they became so happy that they were now having two people [with Alice Lakwena] who are all possessed by the spirits to protect the people of Acholi.*¹⁶

The popularity of Alice Lakwena’s and the HSM some months before set the conditions for the causes that Kony was said to be fighting for. As further suggested in existent literature on the conflict in northern Uganda, by capitalising the frustrations of the Acholi people and adding spiritual values, Kony successfully gained supporters.¹⁷ In other words:

15 Verification Questionnaire, p. 1.

16 Verification Questionnaire p. 2

17 Green, M. (2008), *op. cit.*

Kony drew on the same pool of Christian and Acholi beliefs [as Alice Lakwena] at a time when people desperately needed a redeemer, and he was by no means alone.¹⁸

price.

When asked about the reasons why Odek community members supported Kony in the early days of the LRA, a respondent explained:

We believe that Kony's going to the bush was not for anything but for a reason which was to save the Acholi people from so many plans that the government and other leaders had towards the Acholi people.¹⁹

Another respondent recalls how Kony managed to recruit people in the early days of the LRA:

When he gathered people he never used force, and really, it was the spirits in him talking not himself. Kony left home to go to the bush not with an intention of killing people, but with the spirit in him.²⁰

Despite this, it did not take a long time for the LRA to start conducting abductions in order to strengthen its military capacity. People from Odek recall massive abductions perpetrated by the LRA in late 1987, 1988 and 1989, and in 2004, as it will be documented in Section 2. Several years after the community innocently collaborated with what the spirits demanded, attended to the meetings and listened to what the spirits said, and offered their people to fight for the Acholi people along Kony, the community of Odek paid the highest

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Verification Questionnaire.

²⁰ Interview with a respondent.

Victimisation in Odek

Operation Fagia: The NRA's Major Military Operation

In the initial stages of the LRA rebellion, Kony sought most of his support from the local communities, including Odek, and former soldiers who defected from other rebel groups. In order to counter these developments, the government engaged in a military campaign against the rebels. Civilians living in the sub-county of Odek were presumed to be supporting Kony and grossly suffered as a result. This would mark the beginning of the intensification of the conflict and a state of war that would endure for the next two decades.

As the LRA continued to mobilise and gain military strength, in 1988 the NRA intensified its operations in Odek. NRA soldiers began arresting people, breaking into houses and harassing the civilian population. Some families took refuge in the bush at night, while the NRA allegedly looted animals, food and basic utensils. The soldiers arrived in Odek determined to crack down any rebel collaboration, support or any uprising. According to Odek community members, the purpose of the operation was to target Kony's place of origin. In the words of a respondent:

For me I agree that the operation took

place mainly to target Kony's village because instead of the soldiers directly following Kony, they entered Odek from the direction of Lango and killed very many innocent civilians, burnt houses and looted property.²¹

Another respondent added:

When [the NRA] came, they were saying that we should take them to the hill where Kony prays from and said that they would burn the huts of those who did not want to go with them.²²

According to a former LRA member who was with Kony at the time of Operation Fagia, Kony and his rebels were in Palukere, in Atiak, and this is what Kony predicted at that time:

Before the attack, Kony told us that we should pray for the people of Odek because Museveni has sent his soldiers to kill all the people of Odek. He told us to enter prayer and fasting so that we could save the people of Odek. He told us to remove our

²¹ Verification Questionnaire, p. 3.

²² Verification Questionnaire, p. 3.

shirts then he got a calabash, poured out some water in it and mixed the water with some pounded leaves and sprinkled it on all of us as we prayed up to 6:00pm, rested a bit and prayed up to midnight. Kony then told us: 'this prayer is going to protect the people of Odek. Instead of all of them being killed, some people will survive'.²³

Operation Fagia led by the NRA in 1988 (*fagia* is a Kiswahili word that means “sweep clean”) was the first major military operation witnessed by the community of Odek. This operation involved combing the homes and villages of Odek for any suspected rebels or rebel collaborators and cutting off Odek from the rest of northern Uganda. Civilians were collected from all the parishes of Odek by NRA soldiers and incarcerated in Acet trading centre.

The day of the massacre, November 1st of 1988

On this day the NRA conducted a large operation in Odek. Through this operation, several human rights violations were reportedly committed, including killings, the burning of people in huts, torture and looting of property. By the end of the operation 78 men and women from Odek sub-county had lost their lives. The account of one victim who witnessed the killing of many members of the community exemplifies the atrocities committed by the NRA during the operation:

We heard a bomb blast. We heard the NRA soldiers coming where we were and they were very ruthless. On their way from Odek to Acet, these soldiers came across a blind man called Okello Icamo Nono and killed him instantly. As

they continued with their arrests, they reached a market called Kono Cunua in Palaro Parish, Odek sub-county, where they got Ojera Costantino and Ogwang Jeremiya, killed them and dumped their bodies in a hut and set it ablaze. They moved on, crossed a small river called Agweno and came to the first borehole. Here, they killed Moro Aniga, Anying Martha, Lanyero, Oketch Santo and his brother Ocaya Kosantino. The bodies of Oketch and Ocaya remained there and were feasted on by dogs. In this same area, the NRA soldiers also killed Obong son of Elija, and another man called Kitara. They set ablaze the bodies of Obong, Akello Mango and Ekiro's nephew together with a man called Opio Ronald.²⁴

Disregarding age or gender, NRA soldiers tortured civilians to get information or make them to ‘confess’ as to whether their relative was a rebel, if they were collaborating with them or, quite often, just for the sake of disseminating fear within the community.

Once soldiers arrested you a civilian, they would ask you ‘where is your child?’; When you replied that you did not have a child or you did not know where the child was, the soldiers would instead arrest you, enter your house and loot whatever thing they came across.²⁵

Government officials, medical workers, and teachers were also accused of supporting the rebels then tortured and killed. If not killed, the victims were left with serious physical and psychological injuries. The NRA operation in Odek sub-

²⁴ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

²⁵ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

²³ Verification Questionnaire, p. 1.

county was conducted by a combination of the battalions of 55, 22, 58, 10, 112, 125, 105 and 57 of the NRA. Odek became one of many communities in northern Uganda that would suffer due to such a government-led operation against the LRA.

Some people arrested by the soldiers were taken to Odek Primary School where a special pit was dug and the people arrested were put inside and covered the top of the pit with iron sheets.²⁶ Some leaders of the Resistance Councils (RC)²⁷ arrived to establish who had been arrested, and some intervened to get the people released. Only after being tortured for long hours were some of the arrested persons released, while the others that were not accounted for by the NRA would likely be killed.²⁸ According to an RC at that time, the soldiers did not give enough information about the people they had arrested in order to keep them detained. Also, they would conceal information about which soldiers committed the arrests.

People in Odek recalled countless narratives about the sufferings of those who were the target of the NRA during the operation. For instance, one respondent told how the soldiers “bound a big stone around the neck of one man and dragged him under the bridge of Odek River where he drowned in the river and died.”²⁹ Another woman recounted her husband’s death at the hands of the NRA:

He was severely beaten, [had his] hands and legs bound, and [was]

26 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

27 Now called Local Council (LC) which is a lower level administrative unit within the community.

28 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

29 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

*taken to Gulu. After some time, he returned home with a paralysis that led to his death.*³⁰

A survivor recalls his ordeal that day:

*I saw very many soldiers in one line advancing towards us and began to run towards home (...) in our home the soldiers struck their match sticks and set ablaze all the huts in our compound and those in the surrounding neighbourhood.*³¹

Another victim recalled how he survived while others lost their lives when arrested by the NRA:

*[The NRA] came and arrested 15 people from here. I was one of the persons arrested, tied ‘three piece’³² (...). After arresting us, they took and laid all of us in front of a building and killed 10 people instantly using a pistol. Only five of us survived and they took us to Acet where many civilians had been rounded up and assembled (...) still the soldiers did not just stop there, they abducted nine more people (...) pushed them to a hut, locked and set ablaze (...) a man was also undressed and tied, and several dead bodies were piled on him until he died.*³³

As civilians were running for their dear lives, many still recall the horrific acts of the soldiers that day:

I continued to run up to Ayamo hills. Unfortunately, that also happened to be the same place the NRA soldiers were destined for. Here the soldiers

30 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

31 Interview with a male Respondent on the 29th January 2014.

32 A forceful and violent procedure where an individual’s elbows are tied together behind his or her back.

33 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

*came along with three civilians they had captured, laid them down and began to stone them with stones as the men cried out aloud. They got another man, walked him behind the hill and shot him dead.*³⁴

Survivors also recalled how they lost property that day: “The soldiers came to my home and looted my chicken, turkeys and all the cooking utensils that they came across in my home.”³⁵

Another survivor tells of his ordeal that day:

*I was arrested together with very many people then the soldiers accused me that they were reliably informed that Kony’s rebels had come to my home to pay bride price for my daughter. This was a big shock to me because in my entire life I had never heard of rebels paying bride price for anyone.*³⁶

JRP also came across some women who stated that they were raped during this operation.

As the soldiers combed the villages of Odek, arresting civilians, many of whom were destined for Acet, one of the bases of the NRA soldiers during the operation. According to a respondent who was arrested and taken to Acet that day:

*People were tortured and killed, then the dead bodies were piled under the mango tree, some people who had not yet died were also put together with the dead bodies and ended up suffocating to death.*³⁷

This information was validated by other victims of such arrest, who also witnessed that moment.

There is no clear picture of what people did with the dead bodies, however, information gathered by JRP indicated most bodies found in Acet and Odek were picked up by their relatives and buried, while others were buried in certain incomplete pits latrines within Acet Primary School and other unknown venues.

When asked about what they thought were the reasons for the NRA to conduct such an operation and perpetrate all these forms of violence in Odek, some victims expressed that they believed that it happened because it was the place where Kony was born. A respondent answered what the reasons that most people in Odek thought led to the NRA operation:

*That is really hard to tell because there are different versions. Some people say they came in search of the rebels being that Kony comes from Odek so it looked like the people of Odek were harbouring the rebels. Secondly, they wanted to recruit more soldiers into the army to fight against the LRA. Others say that they were just performing their duties as the government army and looking for their fellow soldiers who were absconding from work. Though most people say that the massacre was committed by the government soldiers because Kony comes from Odek and they wanted to punish the people of Odek by ‘sweeping’ the place clean.*³⁸

³⁴ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

³⁵ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

³⁶ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

³⁷ Verification Questionnaire, p. 4.

³⁸ Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.

Protected camps? The massacre by the LRA in Odek camp

According to respondents, shortly after Kony went to the bush, community members were accused of being in support of him, and as such there were a lot of attempts by government soldiers to force the people out of their homes in the villages. Most of the respondents JRP talked to recalled that in the early 1990s the government ordered that all civilians to leave their homes and relocate to the trading centre as a strategy to prevent them from helping the rebels. Civilians, under the threat of violence or actual use of it by the NRA, had to leave their houses and live in government designated places through the army and area local leaders such as the trading centres. Anyone who refused to live in these places would be killed. Odek's community members recalled the story of a man who did not want to relocate and lived in his house in the village until the soldiers found out and wanted to kill him. They went to his house and he was not there but his wife and children were. The soldiers raped the woman in front of the children.³⁹

Though later on around 1993 communities found their ways out to the villages again, in the years following, these same communities from in and around Odek sub-county were again forced out of their homes into Odek's internally displaced persons' camp. The process started in 1997 by registering the people and until 2002 most people were forced to live in the camp. Odek camp, which witnessed a violent massacre in 2004, stretched from just behind the buildings of Odek sub-county headquarters to Odek Health Centre,

and extended downward towards Odek River.

Most respondents say they came to Odek camp because the government had sent a message that the people should leave their homes and report to the camp for safety and also because the government had started deploying soldiers at the trading centre where the camp was to be established. A minority of community members, however, had contrary views: "My home was not far from the centre but in 2002 we started receiving information that the civilians should leave their homes because the civilians staying at home were the ones feeding and harbouring the LRA rebels."⁴⁰

Another respondent said:

The soldiers stopped civilians from returning back to their homes whether you had built a house in the camp or not (...). The soldiers looted chicken and goats and destroyed houses and other properties when civilians resisted going to the camp. Guns were fired towards villages, among them Lakim village, as a way to force them to live in the camp.⁴¹

Odek camp became home to many people whose lives were mainly sustained by the monthly food rations distributed by the World Food Programme (WFP). In the days leading up to the massacre, the community members had just received their food rations and went about their normal

39 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

40 Interview with a male respondent on the 28th January 2014.

41 Interview with a male respondent on the 29th January 2014.

chores.

The evening of the massacre, April 29th of 2004

29 April 2004 marked a drastic change in the lives of the people of Odek. It was 5 pm and most people were going about their normal day or waiting for the children to finish their school day when a group of 200 to 300⁴² LRA fighters from the Sinia Brigade, led by Dominic Ongwen, attacked Odek camp and massacred 93 men and women including school children from Odek Primary school. A respondent said that the reason why the LRA attacked with such a large group of rebels was because they thought Odek camp was as big as Pabbo camp: "That is why they came in such a big number, so some rebels decided to remain outside the camp to wait in case there is need for back up."⁴³

According to witness accounts, hours before the massacre some strange people had been seen within the vicinity of the camp but no one took the sighting seriously:

That same day there was a meeting in the camp to discuss the construction of Agweno Primary School. I joined the meeting late. In the meeting the issue of some strangers being seen in the area was raised and there was also a complaint about the high level of alcoholism amongst the government soldiers who are supposed to protect people but instead we were told not to worry.⁴⁴

42 According to answers given during a focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

43 Interview with a female formerly abducted person in Odek on 23 April 2014

44 According to answers given during a focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

Amidst this fear, community members continued with their daily chores, none of them afraid that there was really any serious threat that warranted precautions. However, shortly after that, things changed for the worse. "I had just returned home from Odek River where I had gone to bathe. I sat down and my wife gave me water to wash my hands so I could eat. I washed my hands and as soon as I put food in my mouth I heard gunshots."⁴⁵

Another survivor remembers a home guard⁴⁶ who was meant to protect her fled:

The attack began at around 5pm. I was inside my hut. Then, one soldier, who was part of the home guards came and as he passed by my house and shouted, "Woman, you are still there? Aren't you hearing gunshots? You stay there, I am on my way to hide behind the anthill."⁴⁷

As the rebels flooded the camp, chaos ensued. Several respondents recall running and hiding in their homes but the rebels went to the huts and continued shooting or looting food.

I was just saved by the grace of God because in my house I had maize and beans that were distributed to us by the World Food Programme. I carried the maize and beans and threw them in the compound ... little did I know that these were the things that God was using to spare my life, because as the rebels advanced towards my hut,

45 Interview with a male respondent on 23rd April 2014.

46 Local people who were recruited to protect the community from the LRA. Community members described them as people who went to military training for a month or two before being deployed and wore maroon uniforms. On occasion, they would go to the battle field to fight.

47 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

*their attention diverted to these things that were thrown in the compound.*⁴⁸

While the soldiers passed through the trading centre and went towards the primary school, people at the camp saw three big groups of rebels of the LRA approaching.

*When the LRA attacked, they made sure that they controlled and left civilians with no escape route except the direction heading to the military detach. At the detach they decided to defeat the government soldiers and sent the majority of them fleeing towards the camp. After seeing that soldiers were running towards the camp, the LRA fighters spread out into the camp and ordered whoever had locked themselves in the huts to open [their doors]. The LRA actually thought soldiers were hiding in civilians' huts. This way they killed both the civilians who opened their huts and for those that did not the LRA forced their way in.*⁴⁹

Commenting further on what happened, another survivor recalled:

*The first words from the rebels came from a woman who led them called Lagulu (...). She held her child on her side with one hand and held a gun on the other hand and she shouted to her fighters that "go and take over Odek Bridge".*⁵⁰

Another survivor recalls hearing from one rebel commander saying "just abduct them."⁵¹ Then, the LRA opened

fire and attacked the camp.

After a few seconds gunshots were heard all over the camp. The group of LRA that entered from the northern direction used a recoiled gun and a light machine gun to launch their attack as another group of rebels stationed within Odek Health Centre. The group of rebels who entered the barracks killed all the people from the home guards or Local Defence Units (LDUs) except one whom community members fondly remember as Lapii who continued fighting even when he remained alone and killed many rebels until he ran out of bullets and was captured and killed.

While some people managed to dodge the bullets, others were just immediately killed. "Immediately I began to see death before me. It is broad day light, where do you run? Where do you hide?" said one survivor.⁵²

Most people hid by the bank of Odek River or in the bush such as this survivor: "That night I slept in the bush and from around 9 pm till about 2 am. It was raining so heavily and the people who slept in the bush really suffered."⁵³ The rain, however, did not stop LRA rebels to continue the attack against Odek camp.

In total, according to camp leaders and survivors, 71 people including 42 women, 20 children and nine men were abducted by the rebels.⁵⁴ Some of the abducted women who were carrying their children on their back were forced to drop the children in the bush in order to carry what the rebels had looted up to Atoo hill. The children were later

48 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

49 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014

50 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

51 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

52 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

53 Interview with a male respondent on 28 January 2014.

54 Verification Questionnaire, p. 5.

recovered by community members. After a day, all the women were released to return home while the adult men were killed and the children were led off into captivity and are yet to be accounted for. Several injuries were also inflicted on the camp dwellers during the massacre many of whom still live with them today.

The following morning, survivors returned to the camp and everyone broke down crying and weeping. People lamented the loss of their loved ones saying: “My child, my child, my child”, and others saying “my husband, oh my husband, my husband.”⁵⁵ One survivor remembers what greeted her that morning: “I came out of my hiding place and started moving towards the camp. As I approached our house, I saw very many scattered dead bodies including my own mother who died with her other grandchild on her back. The grandchild was still alive.”⁵⁶

Religious leaders attempted to calm the people down and asked them to move around to identify the people who had died. The total number of dead bodies gathered was 93. The women abducted by the LRA returned to Odek camp the following day of the massacre at around 2 pm and saw several bodies being buried by the community. According to one of the women abducted, they survived because the rebels argued “they had killed very many women in Odek camp.”⁵⁷ The cruel massacre did not spare even the school pupils from Odek Primary School who were trapped in the crossfire. 26 pupils of Odek primary school were killed during the massacre while they were returning from the school while several others

were abducted. To date the families of the missing children do not know if they are still alive or dead and information on the number of children missing is not clear.

After identifying the number of people killed and abducted, religious leaders and community members dug shallow graves close to each other, at a distance of 300 meters from the camp, south west of Odek sub-county headquarters. Three days after this, government army commanders came to assess the massacre which had occurred. Three weeks later the Minister of State for Higher Education, Hon. Betty Aketch Okullu, and the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Max Omeda came and talked to the people who had survived. When asked about why they think the reaction of the government was so delayed, community members argued that either they received the news of the attack late or that someone in the government had to approve the visit.

Immediately after observing what had occurred in Odek, Minister Okullo said, “The Acholi people have suffered enough. The children who should have grown to develop this place are the ones that death is claiming,” according to a focus group discussion with survivors of the massacre.⁵⁸

A prayer in memory of the people that had died was organised by the Member of Parliament for Omoro Hon. Jacob Oulanya four months after the occurrence of the massacre. Religious leaders such as Bishop John Baptist Odama and politicians such as the Minister George Mondo Kagonyera attended to the ceremony.

⁵⁵ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

⁵⁶ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

⁵⁷ Verification Questionnaire, p. 5.

⁵⁸ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

From the families of those who were killed or are still missing, to those who still bear physical injuries and psychological impacts, their lives of the people of Odek were changed by this massacre forever. Many do not remember being offered any medical or psychosocial assistance for their suffering. In addition to the burden of all the different forms of victimisation they suffered, the victims struggle to survive despite economic constraints and the scant support they have received since the day of the massacre.

When asked to speculate upon the reason as to why this massacre took place, the majority of them said they did not know, while others believed that it was revenge from some LRA fighters on the community of Odek for the atrocities committed by the LRA in other places in northern Uganda. One survivor says:

From my own perspective, the LRA rebels came for revenge. While I was still in captivity, other LRA rebels would say Kony does not want to kill people from his home and yet people from other places are being killed. Many looked for the opportunity to revenge.⁵⁹

Others however claim that the attack was a punishment to the community for agreeing to live in the camp given that the LRA had warned them much earlier. According to an interview with a formerly abducted person, the LRA had sent a warning saying “You people who are going to the camp and those who have accepted to live there should know that we are going to kill all of you.”⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Interview with a formerly abducted person, 22 April 2014.

⁶⁰ Interview with a male formerly abducted person in Odek, 29 January 2014.

Other forms of (re)victimisation between 1986-2004

Both the NRA and the LRA targeted civilians and disseminated fear as a strategy of war by creating terror and confusion among the civilian population. The government incarcerated civilians in IDP camps, a central place away from the villages, whereas the rebels wanted civilians in the villages.⁶¹ Either option had its own repercussions. On this note, many respondents that talked to JRP often asserted the difficulty to differentiate between the NRA and the LRA soldiers since both groups used similar uniforms.

Between 1986 and 2004 Odek not only suffered the consequences of both the operations led by the NRA against

the rebels and a large scale massacre perpetrated by the LRA. On a daily basis, people in Odek saw how their lives torn apart while being victimised and re-victimised in different ways. Both armed groups harassed, abused and tortured civilians who they accused of being either ‘rebels’ or a ‘collaborators with the government’. Below is a brief account of the suffering that the people of Odek went through during this period.

Looting

One of the several mass scale abuses that the people from Odek had to go through was the looting. It is impossible to assess the scale, the costs, and the impact –not only in the economic sense but also in terms of food security

⁶¹ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

and health— that the looting brought about. Food, clothes, cooking utensils, household items, animals, medicines, and even iron sheets were looted by soldiers and rebels. Property and crops were also destroyed. People from Odek still suffer the consequences of losing all what they had worked on for years and decades. Their economic loss has hampered their capacity to pay for health services and school fees, which also in turn has affected the lives of future generations. The victims, therefore, call on the government for compensation: “The government should compensate us for the losses we incurred during the operation. We lost a lot of properties that could have helped us live decent lives with our families but now we are in poverty today.”⁶²

Most people in Odek also underscored the grabbing of the land where the camp was located. In the words of a community member:

*The government should make proper compensation to the victims and people whose land was destroyed, on which the camp and barracks were located. They forced people to the camps and they didn't make any agreement with land owners knowing the outcome of their action.*⁶³

Some women whose husbands were killed also lost their land at the hands of their parents-in-law and have struggled to provide for their families since.

Abductions

During the conflict, Odek suffered a large number of abductions of its populace by the LRA, other than the daily spotted

abductions, community members recall key abductions that happened within specific dates. Key among these in 1987 after the attack on the LRA in Cwero, whereby in retaliation, Kony stormed Odek and abducted over 100 people to reinforce his army. In the words of a community member:

*The worst thing that happened this year [1987] was the mass abduction of youth from this area by the LRA. I still believe that day all the youth here was meant for death.*⁶⁴

In 1988, the LRA abducted 60 people from Odek and in 1989, over 80 youths were abducted. In 2004 during the LRA massacre, 71 people were abducted including the children from Odek Primary School. These major abductions were mainly carried out in a single day within those years while small scale abductions regularly occurred during the conflict time in Odek. These abductions certainly affected the lives of many people in the sub-county and as a result many children, women and men are still missing and there are lots of children born in captivity that are a direct result of these abductions.

The consequences on the lives of the people who managed to escape are immeasurable. Most people had their education interrupted, complicating their chances to have a better future. Others, who are still missing, left their

⁶⁴ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

⁶² Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.

⁶³ Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.

children to fend for themselves while the young girls that were abducted often had children born in captivity. Now,

both mothers and children struggle to survive and to be reintegrated in their communities.

Figure 3: The story of a victim of abduction

One story that stands for the suffering that most people in the camps had to go through is the story of Olim. In 1998 he and his two wives left the camp in order to harvest cassava when they saw seven LRA rebels and ten people abducted that were being used by the rebels to kill and loot. When Olim was captured, tortured by the rebels and being beaten by the abductees, his daughter ran from their home to the Acet barracks. After being seriously injured, the rebels thought Olim was dead, so he ran towards the barracks where his daughter was.

According to him: "All these problems started because the rebel leader Teo Lutinu, an LRA commander, wanted to marry my daughter who had been in captivity. When she escaped he followed her in order to revenge on her family."

Even though Olim was given a large number of soldiers by the army to protect him in order to return home, by the time they reached home the rebels had already killed his two wives who were pregnant (8 and 6 months of pregnancy) and burnt down the house. After this horrible event, and having lifelong injuries, Olim has struggled to sustain his family and look after his sons.

Missing persons

The families of missing persons interviewed by JRP reported that their relatives went missing when they were very young. The majority were abducted in their childhood and the whereabouts of most of them is unknown. The impact of their disappearance still affects their daily lives in many ways: "I feel so sad and I don't concentrate at work. I keep wondering where they are. Sometimes I lose energy."⁶⁵

Adequate psychological support seems necessary, as well as economic support for those who struggle to live decent lives after the disappearance of their family members. Unfortunately, there is no list of clear picture on the amount of people who is still missing. Their hope is for the government to show concern about their situation and respond accordingly. They demand to

know what happened to their relatives, whether they are dead or alive, and call the government to consider amnesty since they see it as an opportunity to know what happened to them. They underscore the importance of initiatives such as the radio programme Dwoġ Cen Paco on Radio Mega,⁶⁶ as a way to share their experience and disseminating information about their relatives with the hope of meeting them some day.

Encampment and forced displacement

During the conflict, several community members were forced to leave their homes and live in camps. Describing their experiences when they first came to the camp, community members recalled that there were not even houses

⁶⁵ Interview with a 72 year old woman.

⁶⁶ Dwoġ Cen Paco ("Come Back Home" in Acholi) was a radio programme broadcast on popular Acholi radio station Radio Mega which encouraged rebel captives to return home.

for the people to live in. Several male respondents in the presence of their female counterparts bitterly complained about sexual violence against the women in the hands of UPDF soldiers as well as home guards who forcefully entered the houses to rape them. They said that often after the women had undergone these experiences of sexual violence, many struggled to open up to talk about it. The men complained

that because of this silence, most of them were infected with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases by some of these women who were victims of sexual violence. Because of this bold statement of the men in the presence of the women one woman, who had come to most of JRP gatherings but had not opened up about herself, felt encouraged to speak to JRP about her personal story of sexual violence.

The life in the camp was certainly far away from being safe and liveable. Even though civilians were largely under the surveillance of the NRA, they were always suspected of collaborating with the rebels. As stated by a respondent:

During that time, should it ever be known to the government that the rebels passed near your home or in your compound whether at night or not it would result into a big problem. When the rebels came and abducted your child, the government would instead say you sent your child to the rebels willingly. If you say the rebels looted my property or chicken, the government would instead say you gave those things to the rebels voluntarily.⁶⁷

This was the case for all the camps that existed in the area: Acet camp, settled in 1998; followed by Odek camp in 2002; and finally Dino camp in 2003. Civilians were refused any access to their homes in the villages by the rebels. If someone

went to get food they left at home or to fetch firewood, “the rebels would amputate your hands because you went to ‘rob’ what was theirs or would just kill you”.⁶⁸ The use of fear and torture by both armed groups was systematic.

During this time, starvation was a matter of everyday life. Since the food rations were too small to sustain anyone, according to a respondent, many young girls were sexually exploited by men in exchange for basic goods and services.⁶⁹ Consequently, sexually transmitted diseases spread over a large part of the population. According to the community members of Odek, the encampment had a huge impact on the community: “Acholi cultural norms and values were destroyed when people came to the camps because of hardships in the camp. Men started drinking, women were practicing prostitution and young girls were being traded off at a younger age which used not to happen in our culture.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

⁶⁹ Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

⁷⁰ Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.

Figure 4: The story of sexual violence of three sisters

In 2003, Laroma, a fifteen-year-old girl, was living in Odek camp with her family. One day her mother asked her and her two older sisters who were 17 and 20 years old to go and

fetch some firewood not far from the camp. On their way, the three sisters decided to pass by their garden in Awere to collect food as well. When they got there, unbeknown to them that government soldiers were using the garden as a hiding point to ambush LRA rebels. When they realised this they felt scared but they had no options. Three soldiers came out and forcefully grabbed the hands of each sister.

After pairing us up, they asked us if we could have sex with them just like we always do with our husbands, and yet by that time we were still young and not yet married (...) We got so scared of the soldiers because they had guns, so we accepted to have sex with them, even though they were very old, because we thought they might kill us if we refuse. The man who held my hands was so old but I feared to refuse him. He took me to a nearby bush and he raped me. The same thing happened to my two sisters. After that they told us not to tell anyone what happened. Not even our relatives should know about it.⁷¹

After the men raped the three sisters, they gave each of them three cups of maize flour in a polythene bag and told them to go. The sisters left the place and walked back home. When they reached home, their mother asked them where they got the maize flour from, but they all kept quiet fearing that telling the truth to their mother would severely affect her. After two days one of the sisters could not contain the pain anymore and informed an uncle who, despite becoming very angry after hearing what happened to the girls, failed to do anything about it and continued drinking. Eventually Laroma's older sister got married and when she was pregnant she tested HIV positive. After this, her husband also tested HIV positive. This caused an alarm and tension within the family. The girls' family and her spouses' family came together for a meeting to resolve the matter. After the two families met to discuss what happened to the couple, instead of finding an amicable solution to the problem at hand, the husband left and never returned. Larom's other sister was also chased away by her husband after learning through someone else that she was raped by government soldiers.

Just like her sisters, Laroma still struggles to come to terms with what happened to her. She is now married but fears that if her husband gets to know that she was once raped by government soldiers, he might leave her. She decided, however, to open up about her story after listening to the stories of sexual violations faced by other women that JRP gathered. When asked about the impact of the rape in her life, she replied: "By the time I was raped I was so young and it was my first time to sleep with a man. The man forced himself on me and I felt a lot of pain. Since then I feel a lot of waist pain and back pain."

⁷¹ Interview with a 27 year old woman, 10th of September of 2014.

Sexual violence

During the research process, it was not uncommon for JRP to come across several accounts of women who suffered sexual violence during the conflict. However, concrete numbers indicating how many were women affected by this type of violence are largely unknown. Most women fear

telling their stories because their husbands and family might reject them. Some women were left with children, either as a result of rape or after as "wives" after being abducted by the LRA, and have had to struggle to look after them. JRP gathered the testimony of a woman who dared to speak for the first time about her experience during the war after sixteen years and how she

was severely sexually abused by an female LRA rebel.

Figure 5: The story of a victim of sexual violence

The story of Larem speaks to how women were systematically targeted by both the NRA and LRA. In February 1997, Larem, then 22-years old, was abducted along with three other women. As is the fate of most abducted women, they were bound to be forcefully given to rebel soldiers as their wives. "If a rebel chooses you however old he is you could not say no or show any sign of resistance whenever he wanted to have sex with you or else you would be tortured seriously or even killed," Larem says.

On their journey, more women were abducted. At one point a pregnant woman that was in the group attempted to escape but she was captured by the rebels afterwards. Then, the rebels asked: "Do you know where this girl is coming from?" The women answered that she was from Odek. Then the rebels replied: "She tried to escape and now we have brought her to you so that you can kill her."

As much as the women did not want to kill the woman, the fear that they were feeling, and the certainty of what would happen to them if they did not follow the rebels' orders, made them to do something they would never have imagined they would do:

We were very scared to kill our friend but we had to obey or else we would die. So one girl got up and hit this pregnant girl with a stick slowly and immediately a rebel cut her with a panga to death. On seeing this, we got our pangas and hoes and cut her to death because the rebels were already annoyed with us.

After this horrible event, they continued walking when the NRA bombed the rebels. After becoming being injured on her leg, Larem found an opportunity to escape. After travelling a short distance, she surrendered to government soldiers. Instead of being protected and provided assistance after all she had to go through, she was victimised again by the soldiers. "I was taken to Achol-pii barracks as they looked for my parents. I stayed in the barracks for 4 days but every night the leader of the government soldiers would rape me", Larem said. On the fourth day her uncle, who was a UPDF soldier came and took her to her parents.

After these events in 1999, Larem was abducted again when she and her three sisters were hiding in the bush when the rebels found them. Her two younger sisters were left behind and her older sister managed to escape. She was abducted that night along with other people from Odek and Awere. According to Larem. "All the women were given as wives to the rebels who kept having sex with us whenever they liked." After some time, she fell pregnant with the child of the man she was given as a wife to.

One day, when walking with the rebels towards Ongany in Pader district, they passed through a home where two men and two pregnant women were seated outside. When the men saw the rebels they ran and left the women there. The rebels asked the women why the men ran then immediately shot them. During those days, government soldiers were following the rebels very closely.

One evening, Larem hid in the bush and in the next morning went to a house of an old man who suggested taking her to the government soldiers as the law required. When

she told him that she was raped by the leader of the government soldiers on a previous occasion, the old man looked for her parents and took her to them instead. Since she did not pass through the government soldiers as the procedure required, she was accused of being a rebel. Fortunately, her uncle clarified she was not a rebel and she was able to go back home.

Years later, Larem is still struggling to survive. Her education was interrupted by these abductions and her father was not able to take her to school after she gave birth. She is now married and has three more children but her husband just looks after his own children. Paying school fees and providing all the needs of her child is very difficult. She requests the government and NGOs to help her in order to secure the future of her child born in captivity.⁷²

72 Interview with a 39 year old woman, 20 January 2014.

Torture and psychological violence

Community members of Odek were victims of several forms of torture and psychological violence due to the label of being from Kony's hometown. The community reported many situations in which they were targeted by both the NRA and the LRA because of this reason. For instance, during the peak of the violence between the NRA and the LRA, the government asked all people of Odek, particularly Kony's clan (Palaro) and family to perform an Acholi ritual called *agat*⁷³ to curse and disown Kony so that his rebellion would become futile.⁷⁴ This resulted in retaliation from Kony against the community of Odek because his people had disowned him. As a result, he ordered that anyone abducted from Odek should "receive severe beatings and have part of

73 Odek community members provided a lengthy explanation of this ritual: "This is a ritual done to someone who does not have respect for the people of his clan, or someone who is causing suffering to the people he should protect. This ritual is not performed just for the sake of it. The person must have done something wrong for it to be effective." The ritual uses a leaf called *olwedo*, which is held while the person doing the ritual speaks out: "You, so and so, I have not offended you in any way but you are here hurting me for nothing. Today I am here to say enough is enough. Let whatever bad things that want to happen to you come true." The name of the person against whom the ritual is done is mentioned repeatedly while hitting the leaf on the ground. Then the person performing the ritual says: "If you are to die, die!" and spits on the ground as he/she continues saying these words.

74 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

one side of their ear sliced off as an identification mark".⁷⁵ According to community members, what Kony did not know is that the community never conducted the ritual.

People of Odek also recounted one situation in which the government issued a decree that commanded women and men to arm themselves with knives, spears, bows and arrows against the LRA. A group of armed civilians at one point actually confronted a group of LRA soldiers and overpowered them. Later, the LRA followed some of these people and locked them in a hut and set it ablaze in retaliation. Since the government often forced civilians to collaborate and make alarms whenever they sighted the LRA, the rebels would often inflict inhumane retaliations if they found out. An evidence of rebel cruelty was when a group of fifteen women had their lips chopped off because they tried to make an alarm to alert government soldiers about LRA presence. Torture and psychological violence was also perpetrated either by NRA or LRA members on an individual basis. Further research about the scale of these atrocities is needed as well as immediate medical and psychological assistance to the victims of torture.

75 Focus group discussion in Odek, 29 January 2014.

Land mine victims and physical disabilities inflicted

In 1996, the LRA started planting landmines on roads and along water sources. Odek community members reported to JRP a total of 35 people injured by landmines who have not received any assistance. When asked if there are still landmines or unexploded devices, a community member answered: "We have come across landmines in various places like along Dino road. We have informed the police about it. There is my garden which I have decided to abandon because I suspect that there could be many land mines in it." Furthermore, the LRA used to installed traps called *Kwak*,⁷⁶ which injured some community members.

⁷⁶ *Kwak* are metallic traps with spears used to catch small or big animals including elephants.

Others community members were left with physical injured after severe beatings that the soldiers or the rebels inflicted on them. One community member told JRP how physical injuries still affect his life:

*I have sustained a lot of injuries during these abductions on my knee and waist that were hit by the rebels during the abduction. It still pains me a lot when I go to dig or walk long distances and this has affected my productivity.*⁷⁷

Moreover, people left with physical disabilities have struggled to pay for health services and health supplies. Such victims need to be protected and supported in order to help them to deal with their disability or injury.

⁷⁷ Interview with a 72 year old woman.

Figure 6: An untold story of sexual abuse⁷⁸

One night in April 1998, Maa a forty-year-old woman was at home with her children when LRA rebels came at a round midnight and took all the food and other livestock and abducted the children who were told to carry luggage. Feeling helpless and emotionally devastated, Maa stood outside watching the children being taken away by the rebels. After a short while she returned inside her hut, and noticed that she was being followed by a female LRA rebel who shortly entered the hut as well. In the house, the woman commanded Maa to lie down on her back. When Maa complied with this command then this female rebel picked a wooden comb that was hanging on the wall and inserted it in her private parts. Maa recalled what the woman did in her own words:

When she realised that the comb was not doing what she wanted, she looked up on the wall of my hut and picked a mingling stick and she inserted it in my private parts and started twisting it rapidly. This was too painful for me and I started crying but then she warned me and told me; 'if you cry, I will kill you'.

According to Maa this caused heavy bleeding, when the female rebel removed the mingling stick. Eventually, the rebel walked away and left her victim helpless and severely injured. After this event, Maa went through four days in pain, alone in her house, since her children were taken away by the LRA and her neighbours and other members of the community had gone to hide.

On the fourth day, a boy who was riding a bicycle passed nearby the home and saw her lying down near her hut.

⁷⁸ Interview with a 60 year old woman, 9th of September of 2014.

The boy took me as fast as he could to Odek Health Centre for treatment because by that time the war was still going on and it was not safe to move on the road. When we reached the health centre, I was given treated but the pain has never stopped. Sometimes I see blood flowing from my private parts and I feel a lot of pain”

Maa still struggles to understand why that woman did that to her although she thinks that rebel looked “mentally ill”,. When asked about how this event affected her life Maa replied:

The LRA rebels took my children to the bush and killed all of them. I have remained alone and after the woman inserting the comb and a mingling stick in my private part I have become completely weak. I have pain in my lower abdomen, waist, back and joints. Sometimes if I go to the toilet, for either a short call or long call, nothing comes out in the process.

*Besides the pain and psychological consequences that Maa is still going through, during the war government soldiers stayed on her land and dug **adakis** (holes used by the soldiers to hide from the LRA rebels) which destroyed the fertility of the land and it cannot be used for farming anymore. Maa also explained the reasons why she had never told her story:*

JRP is the first NGO I am telling this problem because before I felt so embarrassed and uncomfortable telling anyone about what happened to me, but when JRP came and the people in the group, especially women, were telling their experiences, I also decided to tell my story.

Maa pointed out that she has not received any type of assistance, neither medical nor psychological, to address the consequences of the torture and sexual abused she lived through during the war.

SECTION 3

The ‘perpetrator’ image of Odek

The label of being the birth place of Joseph Kony still has consequences for the people of Odek. Respondents we talked to stated that often people from Odek are labelled as being supporters of Kony. “These are the people who begun the war and killed us,”⁷⁹ is a statement that people from Odek have often heard from individuals or other communities every time they learned that they are from Odek.

People from Odek account for many stories in which they are being perceived negatively by people from other villages. They have been denied access to services, such as health, because they come from the place where Kony was born.

*I had gone for an X ray [at one of the major hospitals in Gulu town]. When the doctor found out that I am from Odek, he asked whether Kony’s people also fall sick. Other women with me in the hospital were attended to but I wasn’t. I had to get medical attention from another doctor. I got the medication but I have never been given the X-ray results.*⁸⁰

The community of Odek itself has also been affected by the stigma of being

associated with Kony and the LRA. In the words of a respondent:

*As a result, [Odek community members] have limited platforms in politics, school and hospitals. Before the war, Odek was developed and with bright children. Right now there is no sensible trading centre, and the hospital facilities are inadequate and dilapidated. Many sub-counties are much better than Odek. Odek has not been given any developmental assistance.*⁸¹

Furthermore, the stigmatisation has severely affected the identity of the community and undermined the potential for reconciliation.

Despite the end of fighting, the perpetrator image that the Odek people endured during the conflict has persisted to date. A lot of them pointed to the fact that to most people outside of Odek, there is no distinction between Odek and Kony; the two words are used interchangeably. As such, there is an assumption that people from Odek are fully aware of what Kony did, supported it or did not suffer during the conflict. Many of them confessed how time and again they were turned down in hospitals, at jobs or schools after

⁷⁹ Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.

⁸⁰ Focus group discussion in Odek 22nd to 25th April 2014.

⁸¹ Focus group discussion in Odek.

establishing that they are natives of Odek.

As a result, people from Odek feel that they should not be labelled since it is not only the LRA that committed atrocities in their village as government soldiers are also to be blamed. They strongly urged that the people of Odek should not be looked at as the perpetrators and the source of the LRA war. They want Uganda to know that they suffered from the conflict as much as others did and that Odek is not only about Joseph Kony: “Kony should be viewed as a citizen of Uganda and not of Odek,”⁸² one respondent said. Another stated:

*Every person who comes to Odek focuses on Joseph Kony. The government should come out with a public declaration that the people of Odek are innocent.*⁸³

When asked about how they felt about national and international researchers coming to Odek to ask about Kony and the origins of the LRA, community members said they feel upset and uncomfortable because researchers would go asking random people how to find Kony’s birthplace or Awere hills. They trusted JRP, however, because “[JRP] grouped us according to our violations and gave all of us the opportunity to speak without any bias.”

JRP inquired about how Kony’s relatives lived during the war and what the community knew about them. According to the information that emerged during a focus group discussion JRP held with the different categories of community members of Odek, Kony had nine siblings, most of which were killed by

government forces and now there are left only three, himself, a brother who is with him in the bush, and another sister who lived outside Gulu. Community members mentioned that Ochieng Julius, Olanya Clement, Ochora Walter, Akello Acii, Odong Geoffrey and Lakot Gabrella were all killed by government soldiers during the cause of the war. His other brother Okello Jenoni died in 1987 due to natural causes.⁸⁴ It is rumoured that during the war, Kony’s father Obol Aluci was taken to stay in the army barracks several times and that each time a government soldier was killed in any confrontation with the LRA, he would be taken outside and made to look into the sun for the whole day or tortured in another way. Also, it is said that he was told to go in the bush and get his son but he replied: “If you people with guns have failed to get him out of the bush, how you expect me who has nothing to get him out?”⁸⁵

Due to the bonds between Odek community and Kony, most respondents feel that they have been disregarded as a community in need of truth, justice and reconciliation. “Memorial prayers are held in places like Lukodi and Atiak whereas in Odek no one has bothered,” a respondent stated.⁸⁶ They also want the government and the NGOs to look at Odek and help them to support children born in captivity, the families of missing persons and to satisfy their memorialisation and reconciliation needs. In terms of accountability, they also underscored that Kony (and the spirits) should apologise for what happened in Odek:

Kony is under spirits, he has no will

⁸² Focus group discussion in Odek.

⁸³ Focus group discussion in Odek.

⁸⁴ Verification Questionnaire, p. 8.

⁸⁵ Verification Questionnaire, p. 8.

⁸⁶ Focus group discussion in Odek on 11 September 2014.

*or power. If Kony can apologise when not under the spirits he will be well. Of all the sons in his family, only he has survived. His apology is a positive step. Kony will remain in problems if he doesn't apologise. The spirits should be held accountable.*⁸⁷

When asked if they would forgive Kony and welcome him back in the community, respondents reacted in various ways. On the one hand, some community members argued they would welcome him back: "I would forgive him on one condition that he has changed and promises not to continue with his behaviours or commit any more crime."⁸⁸ Another respondent replied: "For me I would forgive Kony and even go to the garden to dig with him."⁸⁹ A woman also said: "I would forgive Kony, because as a mother I know we gave birth to him and just have to accept him the way he is and forgive him."⁹⁰

On the other hand, other community members said they would not forgive Kony because of the suffering they underwent through during the war. One of them said: "I would welcome him but not whole heartedly because I survived narrowly in his hands. My legs were smashed by the LRA for no reason."⁹¹ Another respondent was more direct: "I want him to return so that he can also suffer from the suffering he put us through."⁹²

87 Focus group discussion in Odek on 11 September 2014.

88 Focus group discussion in Odek on 12 September 2014.

89 Focus group discussion in Odek on 12 September 2014.

90 Verification Questionnaire, p. 7.

91 Verification Questionnaire, p. 7.

92 Verification Questionnaire, p. 7.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As it has been evidenced throughout this report, Odek suffered the impact of the war in the same way as many other communities in northern Uganda. However, besides struggling with post-conflict challenges such as abduction, reintegration of ex-combatants, supporting children born in captivity, the community of Odek is facing another war: the war of stigmatisation and political, social, and economic exclusion. In its visits to Odek, JRP's documentation team found many individuals suffering painful physical wounds and injuries, dealing with psychological trauma, and a community whose social fabric and physical infrastructure still bears the consequences of the war while being constantly reminded of the past due to the label of being Joseph Kony's birthplace.

What the findings of this report suggest is that the perpetrator image in Odek is affecting the capacity of community members to address, for instance, their needs of health assistance or livelihoods (since they are often rejected when they say they are from Odek). It also shows that northern Uganda is still far from reconciliation. If left unaddressed, the negative image towards Odek could feed feelings of resentment, anger or the desire of revenge. Following the above, Odek should be regarded as

a community that also suffered the consequences of the war –regardless of being the Kony's birthplace or where the LRA started– and, therefore, play a central role in transitional justice processes.

The following are some of the needs and concerns that the community of Odek raised to JRP, in its hope of being positioned in the social, political and economic map of northern Uganda. These are displayed in the form of recommendations with the purpose of guiding current and future efforts of the government of Uganda and civil society organisations.

“The face and thoughts about Odek should change,”⁹³ a respondent said to JRP. A first step towards this goal could be a public acknowledgement of the conflict experiences of the community of Odek. A public declaration by the government of Uganda could bring to the victims a feeling of redress.⁹⁴ This entails not only the acknowledgement of the violence perpetrated by government forces against the civilians population (for example, NRA military operations), but also the government's failure to protect the lives and livelihoods of the people of Odek against the LRA.

⁹³ Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.

⁹⁴ Focus group discussion in Odek.

Furthermore, government structures, international organisations, and civil society organisations could contribute by organising forums, memorialisation activities, concerts and artistic events, and non-violent mobilisations to eliminate the stigmatisation that Odek is suffering and rebuild the identity of this community within northern Uganda and at the national level.

The community of Odek demands reparations from the government for their losses.

The looting and loss of lives that took place in Odek condemned hundreds of families to poverty. The fifth version of the national Transitional Justice Policy currently in debate accurately points out the need of a comprehensive reparations policy. Some communities have received reparations by the government, such as Mukura and Luwero, thanks to dedicated efforts led by victims' groups. Reparation would provide a sense of justice and redress to Odek community members. Civil society and international organisations could support and strengthen local leaders and victims to organise in groups in order to advocate for their rights and demand compensation for what they have lost could be a good start.⁹⁵ In addition to this, livelihood projects, capacity building activities and financial support specifically targeting child mothers, children born in captivity, widows/widowers, orphans, and people left with disabilities from the war would be ways of empowering the victims and helping them to overcome poverty.⁹⁶

Strengthen the capacity of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) to transform the lives

of Odek community members. The individual and collective needs that the war left need immediate response and are long overdue. As suggested in the most recent debate on transitional justice in Uganda, interim and emergency reparative measures for victims through their existing programs, specifically earmarked to benefit the most vulnerable of victims with education, health, livelihoods projects, etc., could be a way to address their most immediate needs.

Memorialisation efforts are regarded as essential for keeping alive the memories of those who died.

Memorial prayers, monuments (in the form of schools, for example), or facilitating spaces for storytelling and other artistic expressions would make the community feel valued and cared of as well as contribute to create history for future generations, particularly, for the orphans to know what happened to their relatives.⁹⁷ Annual commemorations events of the victims of Operation Fajia and those of the LRA massacre could be held in order to foster healing and reconciliation.

Government, NGOs and other development partners should aid the recovery and development of Odek.

During the memorial prayers that were held shortly after the massacre, community members noted that several government representatives made pledges such as building a memorial and a technical school at Kony's home (to which some community members were opposed). The government has not fulfilled its promises to undertake development projects in Odek. Particularly, the community recalled the promise of NGOs and also called for

95 Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.

96 Interview with a 49 year old woman, 20 January 2014.

97 Focus group discussion in Odek.

developing recovery plans in the area. The community encourages NGOs to help them to get their voice heard by policy makers and the government.

Reconciliation, healing and psychosocial support are vital for recovery of victims. In terms of justice and reconciliation, the people of Odek underscore the importance and effectiveness of traditional justice methods (the traditional Acholi reconciliation ceremony *mato oput*). Also, the work performed by religious leaders was highlighted as very helpful.⁹⁸ Some respondents talked about forgiveness to LRA commanders and the granting of amnesty as a way to encourage people, including abducted persons, still in the bush to return and help the families of the missing persons to know their whereabouts.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the psychological impact of the war still affect the lives of people from Odek.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, psychological support at the grass roots level is deemed as very necessary. Children born in captivity should be targeted in such programs, since they are often victims of discrimination and negative behaviours towards them.

98 Focus group discussion in Odek.

99 Interview with a 24 year old woman.

100 Focus group discussion in Odek.

Annex 1. List of people killed during Operation Fagia, 11 November 1988

Name	Village	Parish
Akech Labongo .B	Akoyo	Lamola
Akech Latin pa Okech	Akoyo	Lamola
Akech P' Obina	Olam	Palaro
Aniganori Moro	Oratidu	Lukwor
Anyayo Joyce	Olam	Palaro
Anywar Oryem	Lukee	Palaro
Apiyo Atilla	Olam	Palaro
Apiyo Oling leone	Lakim	Palaro
Atilla Oyeng	Olam	Palaro
Auma Lusina		
Ayee Labeja	Olam	Palaro
Cem Danieri	Oratidu	Lukwor
Doctor Ben	Ajan	Lamola
Eseza Obuga	Oratidu	Lukwor
George p'Akwinya	Lakoto	Binya
Kijumi wi Aceng	Wi Aceng	Binya
Kilama David	Olam	Palaro
Kitara Mario	Lukee	Palaro
Labeja Alee Baro –Olam	Bar Olam	Lukwor
Labeja Charles Obonyo		
Labeja Kosamo	Oratidu	Lukwor

Name	Village	Parish
Labeja Kosamo	Acet central	Binya
Lakot Maracello	Rom kituko	Binya
Lapwony Acaye Philips	Olam	Palaro
Latigo John	Rom kituko	Binya
Latigo P'Amolo	Rom ki tuku	Binya
Lumumba Okech	Olam	Palaro
Margret Okot		Binya
Marta Anying	Oratidu	Lukwor
Mecicira kidega	Lukee	Palaro
Moro Nekanori	Oratidu	Lukwor
Moro Richard	Luker	Palaro
Obonyo Jeno	Olam	Palaro
Ocaya Moo-wang		Binya
Ocen Lungjino	Barolam	Lukwor
Odong Modikayi	Omyel –Ogali	Palaro
Odong Rubert	Odek Centre	Palaro
Odora Nyangkai	Acet central	Binya
Ogwang Jeremia	Lamu Oratidu	Palaro
Ojera Cosantino	Lamu Oratidu	Palaro
Ojok Amutai	Odek Center	Palaro
Ojok David	Olam	Palaro
Ojok Metodio	Olam	Palaro
Ojok p'Alata	Opong Goga	Palaro
Okech Moo Wang		Binya
Okello Aldo	Lukoto	Binya
Okello Geoffrey	Lakim	Palaro
Okello Jasinto	Acet –Central	Binya
Okello Johnson	Olam	Palaro
Okello Kamaleng	Oratidu	Lukwor
Okello Kamilo	Omyel-Ogali	Palaro
Okello lulech	Opong Goga	Palaro
Okello Martine	Odek centre	Palaro

Name	Village	Parish
Okello Michael	Luker	Palaro
Okello p'Layoro	Opong Goga	Palaro
Oketta James	Lakim	Palaro
Okidi Atanasio	Olam	Palaro
Okot Jimmy	Lukee	Palaro
Okot Nyali	Oratidu	Lukwor
Okot p'Abwang	Dino	Lamola
Okot Pa Onen	Luker	Palaro
Okumu Pilbert	Omyel i-Ogali	Palaro
Olango Paul	Olam	Palaro
Olanya Obee	Odek centre	Palaro
Oling John	Olam	Palaro
Oling P'Lakot	Rom kituku	Binya
Omara Anjello	Omyel i-Ogali	Palaro
Onen Pa Okema	Opong goga	Palaro
Onono Adonga Lino	Lukee	Palaro
Oola Oboga	Acet central	Binya
Opira Biseny	Opong	Palaro
Opiyo Apita	Olam	Palaro
Opobo P'Alfonsio	Lukoto	Binya
Oringa Olwoch	Lukee	Palaro
Owiny p'Otoo – Edrine	Olam	Palaro
Owot p' Okema	Omyeli Ogali	Palaro
Oyet Isaiah	Olam	Palaro
Simion Obura	Rom ki Tuku	Binya

Annex 1. List of people killed during LRA's operation in Odek IDP Camp 29 April 2004

S/N	Name	Designation
1	Lapir Albiriko	LDU
2	Latin pa Lapir	3 yrs old
3	Lamony William	LDU
4	Okech Kizikia	Farmer
5	Auma Bironika Okech	Farmer
6	Okullu Adoni P'Ojege Okech	Farmer
7	Mary Obonyo	Farmer
8	Okot Valentino	Farmer
9	Ogwen Jenaro	Farmer
10	Obur Charles	Cathechist
11	Christine P'ayita	Farmer
12	Okello P' Albiriko	Farmer
13	Opiyo P'Alwany (Thomas)	Farmer
14	Omoro Aldo	Farmer
15	Dorish Apiyo	Farmer
16	Omony Pa kongga	Pupil
17	Ojok Walter p'okosonga	Pupil
18	Kerobino Acayo Okeny	Farmer
19	Lapidi pa Obote(Apio)	Farmer
20	Odong Robert	Farmer

21	Ocana Christopher	Farmer
22	Labanya Ayita	Farmer
23	Odong Robert	Farmer
24	Moro Christopher	Farmer
25	Laker Catherine	Famer
26	Latin pa Christine p'Ayita	
27	Catherine Okumu	Farmer
28	Okoya Wilson	Farmer
29	Otto Constantine	
30	Anyayo joyce	
31	Kinyera Denis	
32	Okello Aldo	
33	Ochora paul	
34	Oola Fabio	Primary Teacher
35	Ocaya Joseph	
36	Ojwiya George Okello	
37	Abwoli Boniface	
38	Okello Johnson	
39	Onyach Bosco	
40	Komakech Otim	
41	Kidega Richard p'Banya	
42	Moro Richard	
43	Acaye P'opobo Ford	
44	Okello Oduma	
45	Acibo Florence	
46	Ojok David Opoka	
47	Kilama Hilary Opoka	Pupil
48	Ojok David son of Odong Alfonsio	Farmer
49	Ayela Jimmy Ogabo	
50	Otto Fabio Kamilo	
51	Ojok Thomas	
52	Omony Catherine Okumo	Farmer
53	Latigo Titus	

54	Adonga son of Obonyo ogweng	
55	Acen Evaline	Farmer
56	Ajok daughter of Betty	Farmer
57	Kidega son of Omoro	
58	Ojok son of Omoro	
59	Labeja Charles	Farmer
60	Acaye Philips	Farmer
61	Ojok Walter Ogwena	Farmer
62	Okot Son Mala	
63	Odong son of Latim	Farmer
64	Kidega Godfrey	Farmer
65	Ojok Jenario	Farmer
66	Ojok son of Christine Ato	Pupil
67	Okello son of Albiriko Lagoro	Pupil
68	Odong Patrick	
69	Kibwota Nuer	
70	Okello Innocent	Pupil
71	Aber Christine	Farmer
72	Onono James	Farmer
73	Okello Jimmy	Pupil
74	Okot Mark	Pupil
75	Odoch son of Okidi	Pupil
76	Kilama son of Owiny Celestino	Pupil
77	Akera Son of Olanya Stephan	Pupil
78	Okoya son of Oyaro	Pupil
79	Otema John	Pupil
80	Adonga Nick son of Apoloni	Pupil
81	Okello Kisenge son of Apoloni	Pupil
82	Okello James Langaci	Farmer
83	Kidega son of Banya Wilson	Pupil
84	Oweka Jimmy Aye	Farmer
85	Okeny Ensio Ongom	Farmer
86	Aduni Daughter of Odongo Labela	Pupil

87	Rubangakene Alex son of kitara Mario	Farmer
88	Okello Aduma son of Opobo Ford	Pupil
89	Moro Lajaca son of Opobo Ford	Pupil
90	Okello son of Kibwota Erica	Pupil
91	Okello Micheal Onen	Pupil
92	Okot son of Okeny Adonga	Pupil
93	Odong Martin son of Ojok Metok	Pupil

In its efforts to document the voices of the victims of the conflict in northern Uganda, based on the belief that through facilitating communities to tell their stories in their own terms and words not only helps to bring some relief to the victims but also contributes to better inform transitional justice processes, the Justice and Reconciliation Project launches this field note as a first step to acknowledge what happened in Odek sub-county. The purpose of this report is twofold. First, it seeks to make visible the atrocities committed by the NRA and the LRA in Odek and how it affected the lives of individuals and the community as a whole. Second, it aims to show how Odek is silently fighting another war; the war that comes with stigmatisation and exclusion. This report shows how the impacts of the war continue to affect the daily lives of the people of Odek, and undermines its prospects of achieving lasting peace and reconciliation.



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