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**Confronting Stigma: A national Dialogue on Redress and Social Reintegration for Survivors of Sexual Violence and Children Born of War**

**Theme: Combating Stigma associated with Conflict Related Sexual Violence**

**Workshop Date: 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2017**

**Venue: Imperial Royal Hotel. Kampala – Uganda**

## Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organization
CDO	Community Development Officer
CP	Child Protection
CDD	Community Driven programme
CBoC	Children Born of Captivity
FAPs	Formally Abducted Person
GOU	Government of Uganda
IEC	Information Education Communication
JAP	Justice and Rehabilitation project
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender Labour & Social development
MFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUSAF3,	Northern Uganda Social Acton Fund
OWC	Operation Wealth Creation
PLWD	Person Living with Disability
SGBV	Sexually and Gender Based Violence
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme,
OWC	Operation Wealth Creation
WAN	Women Advocacy Network

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## **1.0 Summary**

### **1.1 Workshop overview**

The national dialogue on Confronting Stigma: Redress and Social Reintegration for Survivors of Sexual Violence and Children Born of Captivity (CBoC) was held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at Imperial Royal Hotel in Kampala, Uganda.

The one day workshop was attended by 77 participants (34 Female and 43 Male); representatives of key stakeholders from development partners, government ministries, members of parliament, the judiciary, district local governments, faith leaders, cultural leaders, survivors of sexual violence, children born of captivity, the CSOs at national and district levels, among others.

Despite conflict ending a decade ago following the signing of cessation of hostilities agreement in Northern Uganda, sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) continues to be high and has been normalised beyond conflict into communities and homes. Survivors live with the enduring legacy of the violations they suffered; one of the indelible legacies of conflict is a forced-wife system involving more than 10,000 girls and women, and thousands of children born in captivity.

Stigma continues to impact all aspects of survivors' lives with victim-blaming, rejection, isolation from public life compounding depression, reducing their access to services and increasing economic insecurity. Children Born of captivity are not spared the stigmatization and rejection at home, school and within the wider community. They face derogative nicknaming, trauma, behavioural challenges and lack basic needs. Child pregnancy is common among girls adding to the number of children women survivors care for and boys live in stigma and rejection indefinitely and do not have access to land or resources for marriage dowries.

The largest contingent of attendees came from Northern Uganda; Gulu and Omoro districts where civil society organizations and other development partners have played a major role in complimenting the government rehabilitation program.

### **1.2 Workshop sessions and themes**

The workshop was structured along four key sessions and themes namely:

1. Setting the workshop scene through key note addresses and sharing of experiences
2. Understanding the Impact of the stigma and other legacies of sexual violence
3. Stigma as an obstacle to justice: strategies for enhancing access to justice for survivors of sexual violence
4. Commitments to reducing stigma and ending sexual violence in armed conflict

## **2.0 Methods**

The national dialogue had a complete representation from all stakeholders working to advance redress and Social Reintegration for Survivors of Sexual Violence and Children Born of war. That included, target beneficiaries survivors of conflict related sexual violence, Religious leaders, national and local NGOs supporting survivors of the conflict related sexual Violence in Acholi sub region, Gulu and Omoro local government officials both technical and political leaders, the Police(Family and Child Protection Unit), office of the directorate of public prosecutions (DPP), the Judiciary, civil society organizations like Uganda Women Lawyers Association, the director International Conference for the Great Lakes Regional training facility (ICGLR-RTF) and Members of Parliament, and the media.

The dialogue was structured in a participatory nature through various panel discussions that involved both the survivors of sexual violence and different stakeholders from both legal and social fraternities.

Key note presentations, panel discussions & plenaries live testimonies and video documentaries about survivors of conflict related sexual violence were used to provide deeper understanding of the issues and facilitate meaningful reflections, develop strategies and pledge commitments by different actors in seeking redress and social reintegration for survivors of sexual violence and children born of captivity

### **3.0 Discussions**

#### **3.1 Welcoming Remarks**

##### **3.1.1 Remarks by World Vision**

Mr. James Owona, the Human Resources Director, World Vision welcomed participants and thanked the British High Commission in Uganda for funding the national dialogue as project interventions on reducing stigma ending stigma against Sexual violence survivors and Children born of captivity in Gulu and Omoro Districts. He thanked the International Centre for Transitional Justice for collaborating with WVU.

WVU has seen trauma and behavioral and economic challenges continue to manifest among the survivors of conflicts related sexual violence and Children Born of captivity. In view of these challenges especially in Northern Uganda, there is need to develop actions and strategies and garner stakeholders commitment towards ending stigma and promote justice for survivors of conflicts related sexual violence and children born in Captivity.

##### **3.1.2 Remarks by ICTJ- Ms. Kasande Sarah**

The Head of Office, International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) Ms. Kasande Sarah re-echoed the timely support of the British High commission and highlighted the role of ICJT as an organization that supports societies emerging from conflicts to promote accountability and redress for victims of armed conflicts violations.

She noted that, the process of providing justice to victims of armed conflicts has been slow and unsatisfactory; the government has largely prioritised recovery and reconstruction of the former armed conflict region of Northern Uganda as opposed to delivering redress to victims and protecting the human rights of individuals affected by conflict. This has kept the survivors

vulnerable and marginalized in the communities. In the absence of justice, the consequences of the violations experienced by victims become amplified.

She called for collective action to confront the gender inequality and other structural causes that normalize sexual violence in conflict, perpetuate stigma against the survivors and change the dynamics by shifting the stigma from the survivors to the perpetrators of sexual violence.

### **3.1.3 Remarks by the British High Commission**

Mr. Joseph Bolton, Head of Political at the British High Commission noted that the impact of sexual violence in former conflict areas undermines long term reconciliation. Young men and boys as well as women and girls that were associated with LRA Captivity are stigmatized. It is therefore important to work together to help survivors of sexual violence in conflicts and children born in war access to justice and bring perpetrators to justice.

The UK Government has been committed to eliminating sexual violence's from the impact of war around the world and Uganda, in particular, it has supported organizations working in former conflict areas to eliminate sexual violence to survivors and worked with the ministry of defense and internal affairs Uganda to leverage the efforts of helping access justice International Centre for Justice Transition three survivors.

This national dialogue will reflect on some of the challenges and marginalisation faced by survivors of conflicts, and children born in war in their families and communities, bringing different key stakeholders on board including the government, parliament, CSOs to mention but a few important actors. He noted that the discussions from the dialogue would help enlist commitment of the different stakeholders towards working together to eliminate stigma and sexual violence from survivors of conflicts and children born in war.

### **3.1.4 Testimony of Miss Florence Amito**

To enhance participants understanding of the impact stigma and other legal Agencies of sexual violence, a survivor of sexual violence during armed conflict of the LRA shared her experience and expectations from the national dialogue. (Please refer Annex D)

## **3.2 Key Note Address on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict**

(Hon. Douglas Okello Peter Okao, Chairperson Local Council V, Omoro District)

As result of the catastrophe caused by war in Northern Uganda, emerging effects have led to loss of identity and birth of stateless children coupled with community rejection, children whose clans are not known, deprivation of land rights mostly for women, and children born in war, biting poverty, a culture of dependency, loss of education, sexual exploitation, stigmatization and teenage pregnancies

The Local governments of Acholi sub region and Northern Uganda are grappling with major post conflicts recovery challenges in areas of 6- Rs namely: Return, Re-settlement, Re-integration, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. And to address these problems, the Omoro and Gulu Local Governments has put in place the following initiatives;

- Championing an approach of “*Nonviolence style of politics for peace*” and working with partners, using this approach the local governments have embarked on mapping, documentation and child identity tracing, rehabilitation and reintegration of the children born of war.
- Providing integrated education through skills training to the survivors of SGBV and children born of war in reproductive health support, counseling and guidance, peer to peer training, sports activities, vocational skills training to help them cope with the challenges of unemployment.
- Together with cultural and religious leaders, local governments have worked towards elimination of harmful cultural practices like child marriages, teenage pregnancies and wife inheritances, which are one of the effects SGBV in conflicts.
- Poverty reduction programmes namely: UWEP, CDD, NUSAF3, and OWC. These are aimed at reducing poverty and fighting and gender discrimination
- Establishment of Sexual and Gender Based Violence Shelter (SGBV-S) that offer services like treatment to victims of SGBV, legal representation, guidance and counseling and re-union of husbands and wives.

Working together with NGOs like WAN, JRP, ARLPI, World Vision, Refugee Law Project, Gulu district petitioned Parliament of Uganda on the Plight of Formally Abducted Person (FAPs) to comprehensively address the issues of reparations, compensations, treatment and livelihoods support

### **3.3 World Vision documentary on engaging Faith land youths on recuing stigma & GBV**

The documentary depicted the work of World Vision Uganda’s Magna Carta Project, issues faced by the victims and how World Vision through its community based efforts has engaged faith leaders as “*Champions of Change* to end violence and stigma against survivors and children born of captivity” The initiative is implemented in collaboration with the religious leaders, youths, community leaders, cultural leaders and the local government in Gulu and Omoro district.

### **3.4 Understanding the impact of the stigma and other legal agencies of sexual violence**

To enhance understanding of impact of the stigma to survivors of SGBV in conflicts, a panel discussion was held during the workshop on experiences of stigma at community and Individual level, CSO perspective on the drivers of stigma and its impact.

### **3.4.1 Experiences of stigma at the community and individual level** (Patrick Otim)

The youth who was born in captivity with his parents Patrick Otim, gave an account of his life experiences of stigma and that of his fellow youths/children who were born in captivity. (See annex E)

### **3.4.2 Drivers of stigma & its impact on social & economic reintegration of survivors**

(Civil society perspective by Isaac Okwir, Justice and Reconciliation Project)

The northern conflict affected the population differently but the commonality in stories is the impact of stigma during the reintegration that includes;

- Forced Migration; most of the survivors of SGBV have been forced to leave those areas where they are stigmatized to settle in areas where people do not know their past.
- Rejection of the returnees; many have been denied by relatives because their conflict back ground and are not able to access resources or associate freely in communities
- Breakdown of marriages; returnees are associated with evil, seen as people who are possessed by evil spirits and face challenges of forced separation or divorce once in-laws or partners learn that they were previously in captivity
- Poor performance and drop out of schools by CBoC because of lack of school fees.
- Loss of confidence by the survivors to engage in productive economic activities due to discrimination; when survivors start a business, the communities do like to buy their products.

### **3.4.3 Engaging Faith leaders and youths on reducing stigma against survivors and CBoC -Gulu FCO project** (Harriet Aloyo, Programmes Manager World Vision Gulu)

World Vision with funding from the Foreign Common Wealth Office (FCO) implements the Magna Carta Project that seeks to reduce stigma against sexual violence survivors and children born of rape in Gulu district. As a result of engaging faith leaders;

- Over 500 children born of war in Gulu were mobilised to show case of their of their existence and the need to address their issues
- Working with lead champions like Bishop John Baptist Odama and retired Bishop Ochola, faith leaders have conducted community dialogues and used church platforms to preach to positive messages towards SGBV survivors and children born in war.
- Integration of Faith leaders, tradition leaders, children and youth groups, child protection groups has created synergies to leverage efforts towards creating positive attitudes towards survivors of SGBV in conflicts

- Behavioral change and accountability models have been adopted to help these groups identify harmful beliefs and practices that cause stigma and strengthen existing community response systems

### **3.4.4 Perspectives on psychosocial support, rehabilitation & community reintegration**

(Mr. Jackson Odongo, Refugee Law project)

Survivors of SGBV and children born in captivity experience different types of wounds that have physical and physiological implications in their lives. While wounds can heal; the scars remains forever. Imagine someone drinking his own urine because there is no water, sleeping in the bush, moving in gunshots, being held hostage and when you return to communities you are subjected to stigma instead of being welcomed in the community!

One of the dangerous drivers of stigma is poor opinion from persons in position of power, and ignorance on stigma in the communities. Jackson highlighted strategies for improving access to psychosocial support and rehabilitation of survivors (See 5.1.3)

### **3.5 Stigma as an obstacle to Justice**

The dialogue further held a discussion involving actors from the Justice sector and service providers to reflect on the obstacles to justice, existing strategies and recommended strategies for mitigation. Panelist included; the Senior Assistant Director, DPP and Head of Gender Desk, Retired Judge of the International Crimes Division of the High Court, Commissioner of Child and Family Protection Unit of the Uganda Police, a representative of FIDA-Uganda and the Ag. Director ICGLR, Regional Training Facility.

#### **3.5.1 Perspectives from Uganda Association of Women Lawyers – FIDA Uganda**

(Ms. Annet Badda)

Some of the obstacles to accessing justice by victims of Sexual violence include;

- Lack of enough evidence to support cases
- Lack of facilities and infrastructure in most parts of the country, makes it hard for victims to access medical examination which is crucial evidence of sexual abuse.
- Insufficient prioritizing of the cases of sexual violence in courts of law. This leaves most cases unattended to and denies victims justice.
- Lack of witness protection; witnesses face intimidation from the offenders and this scares them to give evidence in the trial
- Political interference; In some instances powerful people in government intervene to help perpetrators of crime and undermine the judicial process, which denies victims justice
- Allocation of inadequate resources to the judiciary; the lack of resources has led to case back log and has undermined the effectiveness of the courts in delivering timely justice to victims.

### **3.5.2 Perspectives of the Directorate of Public Prosecution**

(Ms Alice Khaukha Komuhangi, Senior Assistant Director, DPP and Head Gender desk)

Key obstacles to access justice & confronting stigma highlighted by the DPP include:

- Limited specialized skills in psychosocial and counseling skills to rehabilitate survivors psychologically by the DPP officials.
- Too much work-load by officers limits time accorded to the victims.
- There is no legislation on witness protection
- Absence of adequate legal and institution framework that empowers victims of sexual violence.
- Limited cooperation from witnesses and their families, due to fear of being hated and stigmatized in their families and communities.

### **3.5.3 Perspective of the Child and Family Protection Unit**

(Senior Super Intendant of Police, Maureen Atuhaire)

A survey carried out by police revealed that;

- Police officers do not have investigation skills for handling sexual crimes.
- The police stations do not have safe spaces and counselling rooms for interviewing victims of sexual crimes
- Although GBV comprises most of the cases reported, the CID are not skilled in handling cases of GBVs
- In-adequate resources both Human and Financial is a major obstacle faced by police.

## **4.0 Findings**

### **4.1 Existing Frameworks and Strategies for addressing Stigma and SGBV**

#### **4.1.1 Legal Instruments by ICGLR Regional Training Facility (Mr. Nathan Byamukama)**

There are a lot of legal instruments that have been developed and put in place by the international community and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) to combat conflict related sexual violence. However, the biggest problem is implementation of these instruments. The ICGLR has instruments that stipulates how to prevent GBV, provide support and protection to survivors. These instruments have been ratified by Member States including Uganda. They include;

- i. The Kampala declaration on sexual violence of 2011; that calls for Governments to support CSA to support victims of sexual violence
- ii. The Kampala declaration establishes a facility fund for reconstruction of social development to provide comprehensive services like free medical to vulnerable women, children among others
- iii. ICGR Protocol on prevention and suppression of sexual violence

Ensuring the domestication these instruments and their implementation accordingly is essential to enable survivors' access justice.

#### **4.1.2 Judicial Bench Marks and Guidelines on SGBV**

By Justice Elizabeth Nahamya, Judge of International Crimes Division of the High court

In 2016 the Common Wealth came up what is called the "**Judicial Bench book**". It's a book that brings out how violence against women and gender based violence's can be handled. The Judicial Bench book notes that;

- Although judicial officers have a special role to address violence against women and are positioned to help victim's access justice, the same court can be a real obstacle to access justice by victims of violence.
- The Judge has to be knowledgeable about the ingredients of the offences of sexual crimes and how to handle cases of gender based crimes of GBV, however many judicial officers have not received training on how to handle cases of SGBV. This hinders effective delivery of justice in such cases.
- Some of the elements of sexual crimes are embarrassing for victims, in some instances defense lawyers asks witnesses very embarrassing questions in open court, which not only traumatize the witnesses but subject them to stigma in court and outside.
- In cases that involve aggravated defilement or indecent assault, by their nature require corroboration of evidence before conviction, to make conviction without corroboration needs an experienced judge. If such a case is handled by an inexperienced judge not aware of jurisprudence for a conviction, that judge may fail to provide appropriate justice to the victims
- The absence of the victim in court affects her / his access to justice in some cases. It may be hard for the judge if not well versed with precedents to convict the offender using other forms of evidence
- The victims evidence is always the best evidence and in cases where the prosecutor has not prepared the victim, chances of access to justice are reduced
- Sexual violence if not corroborated with medical evidence (though other evidence can be sufficient to convict the offender), hinders access to justice. Most judges finds it hard to make conviction without corroborating medical evidence.

#### **4.1.3 Existing strategies for enhancing access to Justice by the Police**

The Police have put in place the following strategies to addressing stigma and SGBV as highlighted by the Acting Commissioner of Police, Ms Maureen Atuhairwe;

- Incorporating GBV in police training curriculum
- Community policing; meeting with community members to dialogue on different issues including GBV
- Capacity building for police officers on how to investigate and handle cases of sexual crimes in a manner that is sensitive to the rights and dignity of victims
- Established a Legal department to mainstream a human rights based approach in police work
- Partnering with line ministries and other partners, to complement police efforts to address SGBV crimes. For example traumatized victims are often referred to civil society for counselling and victims of domestic violence to existing GBV shelters

#### **4.1.4 Existing strategies for enhancing access to Justice by the DPP**

- Established a department of witness protection and victim empowerment
- A victim rights policy is under review
- Prosecutor guided investigations are conducted to ensure that the police gather accurate and relevant evidence from the witnesses
- DPP holds sessions to prepare witnesses and victims before they testify in court

#### **4.1.5 Existing strategies for enhancing access to Justice by CSOs**

- Reintegration support for former child soldiers and children born from captivity in the Lord's Resistance Army's 'forced wife' system. World Vision, Watye Ki gen and other development partners have played a big role in complimenting the government rehabilitation program through community empowerment initiatives and follow-up of survivors. The children rehabilitation programme run by World Vision has for example rehabilitated over 15,000 survivors including women and Children.
- Reception, medical rehabilitation, and economic empowerment of Formally Abducted persons
- Engaging the faith community and cultural leaders in ending stigma
- Psychosocial support(Refuge law project) among others

#### **4.2 Plenary Discussions**

Through plenary discussions participants raised questions on corruption and the limited capacity of the police. It was noted that in one sub-county in Gulu, there are only three police officers and when a survivor reports a case they are asked to provide fuel for follow up and sometimes to use doctors outside the police for medical examination.

In response participants were informed that Police have disciplinary units where acts of corruption and other non-ethical issues by the police should be reported. It was also reported that the Police has limited resources in terms of human resource and finances however, there are plans to enforce recruitment of more staff.

Psychosocial support to survivors of violence is still minimal and needs to be scaled up. Gulu and Omoro local governments, appealed to partners including CSOs to continue supporting children & survivors of conflicts.

#### **4.3 Recommended interventions for reducing stigma & improving access to Justice**

##### **4.3.1 Government Interventions at national and local levels**

- i. Strengthen the national coordination mechanism through the MoGLSD and community based services department at district level to localize the SGBV district working groups.
- ii. Popularize the Domestic Violence Act to prevent and respond to domestic violence related conflicts and stigma.

- iii. The Parliament should influence the MoFPED to allocate adequate resources for financing SGBV interventions and increase allocation to Local Government under the Service Delivery Department
- iv. Ministry of Health should work with the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS), Police and Local structures on enforcement of SGBV policies
- v. Enforce the implementation of the SGBV policies in Uganda in accordance with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 that talks about Gender Equality and Empowerment of Girls, and Goal 16 which talks about peace and justice
- vi. Domestication of the Kampala declaration on sexual violence of 2011 and ICGR Protocol on prevention and suppression of sexual violence and ensuring their implementation accordingly is essential to enable survivors' access justice.
- vii. Strengthen Data Information Management Systems at Local Government level to ensure accurate reporting
- viii. Inclusive programming and increased budget allocations to local governments by central government and donor agencies

#### **4.3.2 Interventions for survivors of violence and CBoC**

- i. CSOs and development partners need to extending the reach and providing more services to survivors sexual violence
- ii. Assessment of coping mechanisms and follow-up of survivors especially the children born in captivity that have grown into adolescents
- iii. Increase economic empowerment initiatives to enable survivors meet their basic needs & that of the children born in captivity
- iv. Paternity and Identity of children born in captivity is a national concern and should be addressed
- v. Continuous sensitization of communities to combat stigma
- vi. Addressing domestic violence and sexual violence in the broader community.

#### **4.3.3 Interventions for strengthening psychosocial support, rehabilitation and community reintegration**

- i. Continue engaging religious leaders to play a role in reconciling community members with the survivors
- ii. Government should scale up its efforts by allocating resources to develop psychosocial support systems in the conflict affected communities
- iii. Addressing the question of identity for children born in captivity.

- iv. Follow up implementation of the petition to parliament by NGOs in Northern Uganda to issue National Identity cards to CBOC that have no identity.

#### **4.3.4 Interventions for enhancing access to Justice**

- i. Introduce and Finance video conferencing so that victims give evidence in safe and secure environment.
- ii. Government to expedite and pass the proposal to amend the evidence act to provide for audio-visual evidence
- iii. Provide for a special court to fast track cases of sexual violence and provision of measures to offer protection to victims
- iv. Enhance more knowledge and application of judicial bench book on strategies of how to handle SGBV, by judicial officials
- v. Specialised trainings for police in gathering forensic evidence of sexual crimes and interviewing victims of SGBV to avoid retraumatisation and stigma
- vi. Strengthening partnerships between police and key actors that are working towards preventing and responding to sexual violence.

## **5.0 Conclusion and Commitments**

### **5.1.1 Commitment by Members of Parliament Acholi sub –region**

- a) Lobby fellow parliament members to pass legal frameworks fronted by the CSO on issues of stigma
- b) Advocate for allocation of resources to priority ministries like the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social development ( GLSD) to scale up efforts in fighting stigma
- c) Engage traditional safety mechanisms to support root out stigmatisation
- d) Lobby for enforcement of existing legal framework both local and international to address issues of stigma
- e) Lobby for establishment of programmes towards recovery and reconstruction in former conflict areas.

### **5.1.2 Commitment by the District Local Governments, Gulu district**

- a) Develop By-laws against stigmatisation of survivors sexual violence and children born of captivity
- b) Support survivors of sexual violence through various programs like NUSAF, UWEP, and Youth Livelihoods Programme
- c) Collect data on children born in captivity to appropriately plan for them
- d) Follow-up commitment made by parliament in 2015 on addressing stigma and the identity of CBoC
- e) Sensitize community members to develop positive attitudes towards survivors of SGBV & CBoC
- f) Work in partnership with CSO to lobby for more resources to scale up the efforts of addressing stigma

### **5.1.3 Commitment by JLOS (Justice Law and Order Sector)**

- a) JLOS will continue to commit to giving victims access to justice
- b) Ensure capacity building to judicial officers to enhance their skills in offering justice
- c) Undertake consultations on available legal frameworks and enforce implementation.
- d) Allocate funds to the Uganda Law Reform Commission to advocate for laws

### **5.1.4 Commitment by the British High Commission**

The British high commission, represented by the Head of Political committed to;

- a) Continue supporting CSOs and government to support better access to healthcare and psychosocial support to survivors, and reduction of GBV
- b) Support governments' ability to prosecute offenders and offer legal support
- c) Called upon the different stakeholders to strengthen their efforts towards eliminating stigma and sexual violence in armed conflict

## **ANNEX D: Testimony of Miss Florence Amito**

*I am called Florence Amito, staying in Gulu district but my origin is Kitgum district. I was abducted in 1996, on the way to school as a young girl. We were told that we are being taken to Sudan to study. On my way to Sudan, we would walk and my legs get swollen, some of my fellow abductees died on the way. It was really difficult to cope up. Many times I thought I would die too. We had no drinking water we improvised by drinking urine which were also struggling to get.*

*From our village many were abducted but we were only fifteen who managed to reach Sudan, many died on the way. When we reached Sudan we trained as soldiers but we were young children. The first exercise you would be given to become a soldier in LRA was that you are trained and told to kill a person. That was meant to scare us from escaping. We were divided among older men as their wives and we were obliged to accept. We would stay two days or even a week without eating.*

*I became pregnant around at around the age of 14, when I had just given birth on that same day we were attached, I almost left behind my child but persisted with her while many of my fellow abductees lost their children. Many of the abducted girls died after giving birth due to lack of care especially food.*

*Personally, I escaped from captivity with three children. I went straight to world Vision rehabilitation centre. And from the World Vision Rehabilitation world became easy for us and we were even accepted to be visited by our relatives. When it was time for reunion with our families, my mother wanted to take me back home, but they were scared of staying with people who had come from the bush. I then stayed with world vision again for other three months and there was no answer from my parents.*

*I found my father who was Medical Doctor in Kitgum Hospital dead. It's my uncle who came to pick me from the rehabilitation centre. His wife refused to stay with me at her home because of my association with bush. My mother was already married to another man who was not willing to stay with me and my children. I therefore decided to stay in Gulu town.*

*I went back to World Vision rehabilitation centre and I was trained in tailoring skills. After the training after 9 months, I started a tailoring business, but it was hard because once you were a captive, people don't like buying your products. I was about to give up, but with encouragement from World Vision I persisted. The tailoring skills I acquired helped me earn a living and take my children to school who are in senior one, primary six and primary four respectively.*

*My challenge in now is stigma. My children got to know that they were born from captivity. Ann their attitudes changed, they asked for their father's home and their paternal identity which is hard to explain to them because we have no village. Besides, they are advancing in education; time will come when I cannot afford their school fees.*

## **ANNEX E: Experience of Stigma at Community and individual Patrick Otim**

*I am called Patrick Otim a student from Gulu, I was born in Captivity. When we had just come from captivity troubles awaited us and that being identified as a person born in captivity. While in the bush I used to have my parents love but when I came out of captivity, every time I was being isolated and I was feeling bad about myself. I came much earlier than my mother, I was relocated to my mother's side, my uncle was taking care of me, after my mother returned from the bush and together with my young sister, she took me to her village and she was shortly abducted again and taken back. Nobody was taking care of me, I was not going to school. When I was seven year old and with my 4 year old sister, we were taken by Peace Corps. We were given to the teachers to observe how we were behaving in the orphanage. While living in the orphanage the children used to stigmatize me to the extent that I never had a friend until when I joined secondary. Every time children would refer to us as killers and people who have been in the bush, I would feel guilty and hated myself.*

*Stigma is really existing & directed towards us, and it's like a disease. Every time you feel an experience.*

*When my mother again escaped from the bush the organization was closing and we were handed to our mother. But we became a problem to our mother; she had no means to take care of us. We would sleep hungry, schooling and I really felt guilty of making my mother suffer. I started to ask about the origin of my father from the elders, but because he was one of the commanders in the LRA, I was accused of his actions.*

*World vision trained us how to live in communities and behave and trained our mother how to survive, and we started to cope up and giving them counseling how to handle us as children born in Captivity.*

*Because of the actions of our father, we only live on our mother's side and we have no connection with our paternal side. I would think that we would need support to integrate with our communities other than living in towns with no identity; organizations can talk to those community members so that we are integrated, taken as part and partial of them.*

*We also request for livelihoods support like my mother came back with many children and she cannot take care of them and because of that many have grown wild they beat my mother*

## **ANNEX E: Screening of I am Not Who they think I am**

The short documentary produced by ICTJ, depicts the devastating effects of stigma and discrimination against children born of wartime sexual violence, and their mothers, in northern Uganda.

*"I Am Not Who They Think I Am"* narrates the story of Arach Janet and Lanam Stella, two women abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as teenagers, who later were forced to become 'wives' of commanders and bore children while in captivity. After eight years as hostages, they escaped the bush—with their children—and are trying to reintegrate back into society in Gulu. Since their return, they have faced profound stigma, discrimination, and rejection from their community because of their time with the LRA rebel group. As the film explains, the crimes committed against them have gone unaddressed and unacknowledged by the government. As a result, stigma and hardship have passed from mother to child, and sometimes even to grandchildren, in an intergenerational cycle of vulnerability and marginalization.