



THEME: SEEKING REDRESS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

TITLE: FIGHTING IMPUNITY

**PRESENTED AT THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES REVIEW CONFERENCE
OF THE ICC IN KAMPALA MUNYONYO RESORT COMMON WEALTH CENTRE
BY UGANDA VICTIMS FOUNDATION ON 2ND JUNE 2010**

CHARACTERS

OPIO (A villager)

OKELLO (A villager)

ODONG (A villager)

OMARA (A villager)

OCEN (ICC representative)

OGWANG (A villager)

LC III CHAIRMAN (Chairperson local council I Wipeo village)

MONICA (Chairperson local council III Atipa Sub County)

LAKOT (A village woman)

PETER (Sub county publicity secretary)

JULIET (A village woman)

KOMAKECH (The mutilated villager)

CHRISTINE (A village woman)

Scene one

(The setting is a small home stead at Wipeo village in northern Uganda with small grass thatched structures which seem to be deserted. The time is at around 11:00am but the sun is shining like at 01:30am in the Sahara desert. Different sounds of birds are had from different directions and bullet shot sound is heard at intervals from distant spots. Curtain opens and we see four local people discussing about the insurgency in their region. Their faces show signs of deep cognition and worry).

OPIO: What is the intention of this man?

OKELLO: It is very hard to tell.

ODONG: But is it Kony or the government?

OKELLO: Kony is there because of the government and the government also ensuring peace but this struggle between the two parties has left permanent painful scars on our hearts.

ODONG: But why? I thought Kony is fighting for peace and the government also ensuring peace but this struggle between the two parties has left permanent painful scars on our hearts.

OPIO: What you should know is that where two lions fight, it is the grass to suffer. So, we are the grass. Can you imagine the number of people who have been killed! Just yesterday, Ogem Primary School was attacked and forty children kidnapped. Where they were taken, what is happening on them, we don't know.

ODONG: Oh God... I remember when they attacked Omoro village; our mothers, wives and daughters were raped. Some were killed and many mutilated. *(A moment of silence, and there comes the chairman of the village. They all turn their eyes to him miserably).*

CHAIRMAN: Good morning members

OPIO: It is not good at all.

CHAIRMAN: I understand, Mr. Opio. The whole region is terrified. We are in a state of fear. At least everyday something terrible must occur in our region. *(Shortly after, there comes a miserably looking little girl carrying a ram shackled helpless baby on her back. Okello sees the girl first. He gets scared and starts running away. This forces even his friends to follow him. Weak as she is, the girl starts crying for help. The chairman stops, turns his eyes to her and loudly calls back his absconding friends)*

CHAIRMAN: Please ... Please members come back. She needs our help. Come she is not a rebel. Come we help the little girl. *(The friends start retreating slowly but fearfully as the chairman picks up the lying down lamenting helpless little)* ... Come – on girl, who are you? *(The girls cannot speak instead accelerates the cry. They all try to comfort the helpless girl).*

OPIO: Girl, stop crying. What really happened?

OKELLO: Don't fear, you are now in safe hands.

ODONG:
MONIC: Tell us something please. Who are you? And where are you from? *(Gasps in air several times and slowly gains strength to narrate the story)* ... I'm Atyeng Monica and am from the bush.

OPIO: The bush! Wha... What...do you mean?

MONICA: It is a long story *(Some air gasps and a moment of silence)* ... It was the year 2003; when the merciless, uncultured, so called L.R.A rebels attacked our school and kidnapped a number of us. Many of our teachers were killed.

OKELLO: Which school was that?

MONICA: Ogem Primary School

OLELLO: Oh ... *(He's reminded of the death of his wife)*...That is where my wife died from. She was a teacher and never did I see even her dead body. *(Laments)* ... My wife ... My wife *(He is also comforted by the friends).*

ODONG: Monica, how did you manage to survive these brutal men?

MONICA: The story is still long. We were raided like cattle, many of our friends died on the way.

OPIO: This is terrible! I understand, they must have died of hunger.

MONICA: Not that. Whoever showed signs of tiredness was either shot slaughtered dead. *(All people are astonished upon hearing this)*

CHAIRMAN: Then how did you survive?

MONICA: After like five were killed, we stopped at a certain point and they frightened us by promising to kill all of us. We were told to move without looking behind, no talking, not even whispering, neither falling sick nor getting tied.

CHAIRMAN: What a pity. Where did you go up to?

MONICA: We continued up to a very thick forest where many rebels were camping and life there was very... *(She cries again and comforted)*.

CHAIRMAN: Sorry ... Sorry Monica very sorry indeed. How was life there?

MONICA: The boys were given guns and forced to join the rebels. What really pained me was when they instructed us to kill some of our fellow friends with whom we were kidnapped. I was forced... to kill... my best friend. Flo... Florence ... Florence, forgive me. *(She cries)*.

CHAIRMAN: The boys joined the army ... What about the girls?

MONICA: Oh ... My God... We served as wives to these people. I became pregnant at an age of fourteen. Here is the baby; I don't know the father because almost all used me.

ODONG: Thank God you are here and alive. But how did you escape?

MONICA: God knows. One day, information had leaked that the government soldiers were coming to rescue us. The LRA top commanders instructed our friends who were now rebels to kill all of us the girls. Soon after, we were lined up ... they started shooting at us. *(People get flabbergasted)*.

OKELLO: How ... how ... did you survive?

MONICA: Fortunately, I was not shot, but I fell down and pretended to be dead. That evening, they packed all their things and left the camp.

CHAIRMAN: Oh Monica it was a very bad experience. How have you managed to reach here?

MONICA: After their departure, I started pulling out of the dead bodies and moved to the opposite direction to theirs. Remember... I was eight and a half months pregnant. I started feeling labour pain on the way and delivered this baby boy lonely.

ODONG: This is mind-boggling. You are now two people! What were you feeding on?

MONICA: I fed on tree leaves and wild fruits. And the baby, I breast fed. I kept moving with my baby day and night till now that I'm here. *(Another figure – Peter – comes rushing. This scares them and they scamper off again. He shouts calling them back).*

PETER: Don't fear ... Don't run away ... I'm Peter ... Come back please. *(They retreat again and pay attention to him).*

CHAIRMAN: What do you want, Peter? ...Are ... Are you ok?

PETER: It seems you're the ones not ok. Anyway, as I told you I'm Peter. I'm looking for the chairman of this village and I was told he's here.

CHAIRMAN: No... no he's not here, but... wha... What is the matter?

PETER: Please don't be scared. I'm from the sub county headquarters and we are moving around villages informing people about a meeting.

OPIO: Which meeting?

PETER: All people are called to gather at the sub county headquarters for a meeting.

OKELLO: What is the meeting about?

PETER: They are collecting people's views about the LRA leader and his group.

CHAIRMAN: Ah... ha I'm the chairman of this village. You see this girl here?

PETER: *(Turns his eyes to the girl)*... What is wrong with her?

CHAIRMAN: She has just escaped from captivity.

PETER: Oh... This is clear evidence. She will be a very good exhibit at the meeting. Don't forget to come with her. Now, I'm request all of you to go and spread the news all over, so that people turn up in big number. *(They all gain courage to go and spread the news. Curtain closes).*

Scene two

(The setting is a play ground at the sub county headquarters. People are gathered under a big tree. The time is afternoon around 2:00pm. curtain opens when the little girl – Monica is ending the story of her life experience in captivity).

MONICA: *(Now looking better but still grieved)...* So that is the life experience I went through and if I'm to be given chances to punish Kony, I can just crumble this crooked man into pieces. *(With a lot of resentment, she sits down)*

SPEAKER: Sorry about that Monica, but it is why we are here today. For that matter, I am inviting our LC III, Chairman to come and say something. You are welcome sir. *(LC Chairman gets up and takes over the floor)*

LC III, CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much our speaker, members present, I salute you all. I know everybody here is aggrieved by the alarming situation and experience our little daughter here *(points at her)* went through in the hands of the crooked, LRA. It is quite absurd. *(Moment of silence)...* Anyway, it is the call for this meeting. I remember it was last month that we sent some of our people here to go and represent us at a workshop which was organized by ICC. As I talk now, they came back and one is here with us. So, we want him to brief us on what ICC is all about. You and I must know that we have suffered and still suffering from the catastrophic acts of LRA. So I am handing over the floor to our representative, Mr. Ocen. You are welcome. *(Mr. Ocen gets up and takes over the floor).*

MR. OCEN: Thank you very much our LCIII chairman and everybody present here today. It is true that we were chosen and sent to represent you at the ICC workshop. This workshop took us two weeks and a lot was discussed. We were therefore urged to come down to the ground and gather opinions from you about the insurgencies here. And as I talk now, my friends with whom I attended the workshop are holding similar meetings in other sub counties.

To begin with, ICC is just an abbreviation what stands for International criminal Court. It is a treaty based court. The treaty is called the Rome statute which came into force on 1st July 2002. It has 111 member countries called Assembly of State Parties. During the 19th century, it was found out that many crimes happened and went unpublished. So ICC came with its major aim of stopping impurity. The three crimes tried by ICC are war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the genocide.

The concern of the ICC is to ask the affected communities on how they can get involved in the stopping of this impurity. I mean, how are you going to help ICC to help you?

MONICA: (Gets up first)... To me, you need not to ask such a ridiculous question. You don't need our help but just help us. Do you know how many people have perished due to the horrific acts of this boorish so called Kony? No... no... tit for tat... this man must be scratched into pieces and incinerated to ashes never to see his skeleton not even his grave. (*Commemorates the bush life experience*)... Kony... (*She sits down*)

KOMAKECH: (*Raises his hands*)... You see these missing legs and lips of mine? It is Kony... He attacked my home, killed my children and wife and mutilated me like this. Oh... Kony... If ICC is there really, it should help us get this man. Getting him, crucifying, full stop. (*Sits down*)

CHRISTINE: (*Gets up*)... My question goes to Mr. Ocen. At the beginning you said that ICC came to Uganda in 2002 and this issue of Kony started way back in 1980s. My question is: What is the upshot of the people who were victimized by Kony before ICC became operational in Uganda?

CROWD: Ah Ha... (*Crowd supports the view raised*)

OCEN: Your question has been noted. But ICC can only investigate and try crimes from 1st July 2002.

OKELLO: (*Gets up*)... I have also one or two questions. Number one: Do you think arresting and killing Kony alone is enough to comfort and heal the people's hearts? Nhu... can his death compensate for thousands and thousands of lives lost due to his horrific acts? What about the property lost?

Second question goes to ICC: How will reparation be made to people who lost their relatives and property?

OCEN: I am not ICC but your questions have been noted and I will forward them.

MARGARITA: (*Rises up*)... According to what I have heard from here today, it is like people are only concerned about Kony yet I hear the major objective of ICC is 'Seeking redress for human rights violations' One of our rights is possession of property. What will be done to the Karamojong who acquired guns from the government and

raided our animals using their guns? How can ICC help us to take government to court?

OCEN: ICC only tries individuals not government nor groups or organizations.

CROWD: (*Supports the point raised*)... Yes... Yes...

CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I know the pain we have experienced. But is this Kony and his people could realize their mistakes and ICC comprises with the idea of the Uganda's government to offer Kony amnesty, we accept him back. (*He is attacked by despondent Odong.*)

ODONG: You don't know what you are talking about. (*He instructs little Monica to get up*)... Girl, get up... get up my daughter. (*She gets up and moves closer to him*)... How many cows did Kony pay to marry and produce a child with her? ...Nhu... who is going to cater for this little boy? How many friends of hers were killed? Were you there when she was narrating how she suffered? Did Kony forgive her? Hullo, reason maturely. And you are talking about amnesty, ICC is only giving LRA top commanders posh cars, comfortable accommodation, security guards, yet they are the ones who committed crimes against us. Kony should be slaughtered. (*With a lot of anger*)

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Odong, understand this, we need amnesty because some of our children who were abducted and forced to join the rebels will also face ICC and equally charged as Kony.

CROWD: Yes. Yes/No... No...but we Kony not our children.

JULIET: (*Gets up with her view*)... You people don't fight over that. Good enough ICC is already in Uganda. Let them arrest Kony and deal with him accordingly.

ODONG: Accordingly! What is accordingly? ICC doesn't know Kony, it is we who know this man. (*So we have to weigh the weight of punishment that Kony deserves*). Kony should instead be tried in Uganda rather than ICC where he will be offered comfort yet the affected he tortured are continuously suffering. He should suffer in Uganda under Uganda National crime Penalty.

CROWD: Yes... Yes... No... No... (*Conflicts intensifies*)

OGWANG: *(Gets up)*... Cool down members. We are all Ugandans; Kony is also a Ugandan, why don't we use the traditional way of justice?

OKELLO: Check this one. You think Kony is your friend? *(While pointing at him)* if traditional way should work, let it bring back our children, wives and children who were kidnapped and others killed. Otherwise traditional way has nothing to do with compensation to those who lost their dear ones and property.

OGWANG: Eh... Bu...t... but he is a Ugandan.

OKELLO: Then you also deserve to be killed *(He attacks Ogwang with an intention of beating him up. Chaos arises as the crowd divides into two conflicting groups. This re-traumatizes the little girl-Monica)*

MONICA: *(Screams loudly)*... Wa... ah... ai *(This attracts the attentions of the conflicting crowd. They all turn their eyes to the girl as she collapses) ...Don't kill me... don't kill me... (As Lakot comes and picks her up)*

LAKOT: *(While holding Monica in her left hand)*... Now you see... it is like jumping from a frying pan into fire... She thought she had escaped from trauma. *(While pointing at Monica)* Only to find it here again. *(Air gasps)*... A lot of questions have been raised... Many are talking about International Criminal Court yet others are talking about special division of the High Court, others are talking about Traditional Justice System while others are talking about amnesty condition and others truth and reconciliation commission. Many views have been raised but which ones and who to implement? Many questions have been asked but who to answer them. I hear that there is a review conference where it could be they are coming to arrest Kony, other wise we are ...in ...total dilemma. *(She looks up miserably)* ...Help us God. *(Scene ends with a song about the dilemma people are in hence seeking for redress.)*

(People end the play by singing a unison song as below)

| d : d , d / d : - | r : r , r / r : - | m . , m : m . , f / s : d | f : m / r : - |
| No where to go | No where to end | We are in the state of di - le - ma

| s : s / s : m | f : s . s / l : f | r : m . f / s : f . r | d : t , / d : - ||
| Ma - ny ques-tions | and ma-ny is-sues | ha-ve been raised but no an - s-wers yet.

THE END