

Annex 1



WAR VICTIMS AND CHILDREN NETWORKING

(WVCN)

A Membership Community Based Organisation

PLOT 5, Bishop Wani Road, Pece Division, GULU, Uganda

BRIEF AND PRIORITY NEEDS

1. INTRODUCTION

The War Victims and Children Networking (WVCN) is a community-based, membership organization open to women victims of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) war in Northern Uganda. Started in 2017, and formally established in January 2018, WVCN has a membership of one thousand two hundred twenty five (1,225) members, former abductees of the LRA, who took up government amnesty and escaped from captivity to return to their communities.

2. BACKGROUND

The War Victims and Children Networking organization was established in response to the plight of former abductees of the rebels of the LRA who managed to escape from the bush in order to return to civilian and normal lives. These women of varying ages but mostly in their twenties and early thirties, were abducted as young girls, married off to LRA rebels living in the wild for several years. On return to their villages with their children born in captivity, they consistently experienced rejection of their children born to LRA rebels by their families and communities. These women find themselves struggling to survive with their children without incomes or support.

For a number of years, these women told their stories to non-governmental organizations and researchers who made promises of support, which they did not honor. Exhausted with being subject of studies with little or no support to address their needs, they decided to form their own community-based organization. They received encouragement from the Sisters of the Roman Catholic Church to organize a women's group of initially forty-four (44) and a small savings scheme under a tree in July 2017. They operate in the Districts of Northern Uganda, in Agago, Amuru, Lamwo, Nwoya, Omoro and Pader districts in Acholi sub region, some part of West Nile, and some part of Teso sub-Region.

WVCN has had some support from the Law Refugee Project to treat the injured; and from the Uganda Association of Female Lawyers (FIDA- Uganda) for victims of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). The 3,889 women members of WVCN have among them more than one thousand (1,700) children that they

are looking after. Most of these children have no fathers as most of them were born to LRA rebels that either died in the bush or have not returned. Some of them have also lost their mothers during the escape from the bush and are being cared for by members of WVCN. More than seven hundred children lack access to basic education due to lack of money for school fees. A number of those out of school are in the street as members of gangs.

3. VISION, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF WVCN

- **Vision**

A center empowering war victims, vulnerable children and women to change their lives.

- **Mission**

War Victims and Children Networking works in partnership with vulnerable communities and diverse organizations to overcome psychological distress and foster livelihood and economic wellbeing of the community affected by war in Northern Uganda.

- **Aims and Objectives**

With a special focus on post conflict Northern Uganda, WVCN aims to:

- a) Promote sustainable psychosocial wellbeing of war victims, orphans, and extremely vulnerable individuals (widows, widowers, street children, child headed families and people living with HIV/AIDS).
- b) Promote sustainable livelihood activities for war victims, orphans and extremely vulnerable individuals
- c) Equip and empower community groups of war victims, orphans and extremely vulnerable individuals with sustainable income generation activities
- d) Create access to quality education services for children born of war, orphans, and street children.
- e) Ensure that all war victims are integrated back into their families and communities.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to war victims that are aged eighteen (18) years and above. Members pay a registration fee of Twenty Thousand Uganda Shillings (Ugx 20,000); and an annual fee of Ten Thousand Shillings (Ug x 10,000)

5. GOVERNANCE

The governance structure of WVCN includes:

- a) **The Assembly** of members which meets annually as the supreme decision-making body, to appoint members of the Governance Board; approve policies and programmes; approve the Annual Report and Audited Accounts; and approve staff appointments
- b) **The Board of Trustees** made up of a minimum of three (3) and maximum of five (5) members, who are people of high standing, good reputation and credibility in the society. They appoint a Chair for their Board.
- c) **The Governance Board** of nine (9) members, that include the Founders of the organisation, war victim returnees, women and men. Board members are elected by the Assembly. The Board appoints an Executive Committee made up of the Founder, a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.
- d) **Sub-Committees of the Board** include: Finance, Welfare and Disciplinary committees. Technical Advisors and a Patron may be appointed.
- e) **The Secretariat**, which manages the day to day affairs of the organization

6. PRIORITY NEEDS OF WVCN

In spite of the many efforts and resources mobilized for the rehabilitation of post war Northern Uganda, former women abductees of LRA and their children born in captivity seem to have not benefitted from rehabilitation support. Members of WVCN are only a small number of many more women returnees that are struggling to survive without incomes or support. The priority needs of WVCN.

THEREFORE, these are the information the judges would like to obtain:

- Whether other principles for reparations other than the ones already established in the case law of the ICC should be applied in the present case (mentioned below)
 - **The one established in the law could be effective.**
- The approximate number of direct and indirect victims of the crimes for which Dominic Ong wen has been accused;
 - **Approximately 3000 indirect victims and 1700 direct victims.**
- Any legal issue or particular fact that could serve for the identification of victims;

- **The organization for the victims whom they have open their offices to help victims**
- **Lawyers also should be used to defend the rights of the victims.**
- Any victims or group of victims that may need to be prioritized
 - **The abducted girls who later turned to be wives and came back with their children born from captivity.**
 - **Disability person.**
- Types and extent of harm suffered by the victims of the crimes for which Mr. Ongwen was convicted on 4 February;
 - **Pain of the heart, because most of these girls were taken at a tender age and came back with children no body is caring for.**
 - **Body injuries.**
- Whether in some cases, the harm suffered by the victims as a result of the crimes could be presumed. This means that if the harm is presumed victims will not have to prove their suffering further when requesting reparations.
 - **It should be presumed, because what happened on the victims of crime everybody knows and there is no need to prove it again.**
- Which types of reparations would be adequate to address the harm suffered and specifically, they want to know whether collective reparations with individual benefits would be appropriate for in the present case.
 - **Individual reparation inform of physical cash/money**
 - **Health insurance**
 - **Guidance and counselling.**
 - **Education for children and their mothers whom their time had already been wasted.**
- Concrete estimates as to the cost to repair the harms suffered by the victims;
 - **It can take around 4000 Trillion**
- Information on whether the victims of the crimes for which Mr. Ongwen had been convicted have already received any type of compensation or reparations for the same crimes;
 - **Completely there is no any form of reparation given and compensation.**

- Any additional information relevant to reparations.
 - **These reparation should go straight to the victims of crime instead of government agencies because we do not trust the government, the victims of crime might not get the needful through government. There should restriction and serious monitor on the government agencies for these victims of crimes to benefit**
 - **My fear is on big civil societies, because following the examples of the work of civil society in northern Uganda, they eaten a lot of money donated to the victims of crime, hence they should be selected incases they would be the one to deliver services to the victims of crime.**