Foundation for Justice and Development Initiatives

Annual Report

2019
Cover: German Ambassador to Uganda H.E Dr. Albrecht Conze lays wreath on the Lukodi massacre memorial monument

Back: Pupils perform during Atiak massacre annual memorial prayers

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Executive Summary

This year 2019, FJDI’s lead project was building the capacity of victims’ association in northern Uganda and supporting memorial events in communities that experienced massacres across northern Uganda and West Nile regions. In this reporting period FJDI worked with over 32 victims’ associations across northern Uganda and supported 12 victims’ groups to conduct memorial events in their communities. With all these groups, FJDI offered moral, material and financial support. This support helped to boost the appreciation of memorialization across the region, thus fostering healing, and reconciliation among victims. It has also helped them to realize the importance of working in groups, thus fostering unity not only among victims but also communities at large.

To inform debates at the national level, FJDI conducted a documentation highlighting the status of victims’ associations in northern Uganda, and the need for a regional/national day of memory. The documentation resulted in a validation exercise of victims’ groups to establish how many groups exist in the entire conflict region which reflected 32 active groups. The documentation report also found that while most victims are positive towards engaging in both joint advocacy as well as in regional/national days of memory, various challenges prevail to impede their progress. However, the victims noted that there is need for continued localized memorial initiatives as and when they deem fit. In line with this, we played a big role in magnifying victims’ concerns and interests.

Besides the above, FJDI continued to support and maintain the Lukodi Community Memory Centre which was open throughout the year to both national and international visitors. This year 419 people registered their attendance at the memory center. Overall, the center was visited by an estimated 1,000 people including registered and non-registered visitors. FJDI’s most prominent visitor was the German Ambassador to Uganda. In this regard, FJDI contributed to promoting healing through memory and memorialization.

In addition, FJDI continued monitoring proceedings in both the Thomas Kwoyelo trial at the International Crimes Division (ICD) in Kampala and the Dominic Ongwen trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. This involved various activities such as community outreaches, public information sessions and stakeholder meetings geared towards providing information on the two on-going trials. In the Ongwen trial, the defense
concluded its presentation of evidence, and the judges have scheduled closing statements for March 2020. FJDI’s impact was to keep communities informed, thus promoting victim participation.

FJDI also participated in several events/workshops intended to promote justice and accountability for victims of conflicts. FJDI’s presence was visible in events organized by partners such as the ICC, Avocats Sans Frontiers (ASF), Refugee Law Project (RLP), Acholi Religious Leader’s Peace Initiative (ARLPI), Light for The World, Uganda Museum, Amani Institute and others. FJDI attended 28 in-country advocacy events, and 3 international events. At all these events, FJDI continued to further advocate for the fast implementation of recovery programs for conflict survivors. FJDI’s level of participation in workshops/events indicates a positive effect of networking.
Introduction
The FJDI works with children, youth, women and communities to promote justice, development and economic recovery in northern Uganda. FJDI seeks solutions to the long-term impacts of the conflict which ravaged northern Uganda by advocating for the redress of human rights violations and atrocities committed during the conflict, implementation of sustainable development initiatives, and promotion of economic empowerment through livelihood programs. We believe in the concept of holistic justice grounded in the notion that judicial mechanisms of redress go hand in hand with development and economic empowerment of victims.

Objectives
a) To advocate for appropriate policies on democracy, governance, justice and development.

b) To promote social-economic empowerment for vulnerable individuals, groups and communities in Uganda

c) To conduct research on relevant justice and development issues crucial to national debates and policies.

Program Areas
1. Democracy, Governance and Transitional Justice Program
Having been ravaged by over two decades of conflict, northern Uganda continues to make slow but steady recovery from the debilitating impacts of the conflict. This program area focuses on implementation of relevant transitional justice programs in conflict-affected communities.

2. Education, Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment Program
FJDI works to empower vulnerable and special interest groups such as children, youth and women. We achieve this through implementing educational, livelihoods and economic empowerment initiatives for these special interest groups.

3. Children, Youth, and Women’s Program
Children, youth and women continue to be the biggest victims of human rights abuses in post-conflict northern Uganda. They have trouble in meeting their health, educational and economic needs. FJDI, therefore, implements programs in this area with a special focus on children, women and youth as the most vulnerable categories.

Summary of Projects Implemented in 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dealing with the Past: Support to Local Memorial Initiatives and Strengthening of Victims’ Associations in northern Uganda</td>
<td>Feb 2019 – Jan 2020</td>
<td>Northern Uganda</td>
<td>Robert Bosch Stiftung</td>
<td>67,000€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Access to Justice</td>
<td>Jan – Dec 2019</td>
<td>Gulu District</td>
<td>ICC, Open Society Justice Initiative</td>
<td>30,000€</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activities Implemented in 2019

Project 1: Dealing with the Past: Support to Local Memorial Initiatives and Strengthening of Victims’ Associations in northern Uganda

During the Lord’s Resistance Army war in northern Uganda, communities suffered mass massacres leading to the death of several people. However, the organization of memory events to memorize those that died continues to be a challenge. The victims’ associations that exist are weak, divided, and lacking vibrancy and clear objectives. Many of these communities in which the LRA committed human rights violations lack proper memorials and activities that unite and bring conflict survivors together. Northern Uganda as a region that suffered conflict does not have a day on which victims of the conflict are remembered and honored. Generally, northern Uganda as a region lacks appreciation for memory and memorialization as evidenced by the few numbers of CSOs that are working on memory activities in the region. With support from Robert Bosch Stiftung this project sought to address this prevailing gap in memory and memorialization, and strengthening of victims’ associations, in northern Uganda. The overall goal of the project was to contribute to promoting healing and recovery for conflict survivors in northern Uganda. Over a period of one year, activities such as support to community memory events, documentation and profiling of victim groups, advocacy and operational support to Lukodi community memory center were implemented as reported below.

Community Engagements

Support to Community Memory Events

In many communities across northern Uganda that suffered massacres during the conflict, survivors continue to struggle with how to come to terms with what happened to them. Annual memorial prayers play an important role in fostering healing by enabling victims and survivors to remember their loved ones. FJDI supported 12 communities across northern Uganda to conduct annual memorial prayers. As a result of these engagements, FJDI reached over 5,000 community members across northern Uganda.
• **Abia: February 2019**: On February 4, 2019 the FJDI supported the survivors of Abia massacre which claimed the lives of over 50 people in Lira district.

• **Barlonyo: February 2019**: On February 21, 2019, the FJDI team joined survivors of the Barlonyo massacre as they remembered over 300 loved ones who died.

• **Atiak: April 2019**: On April 20, FJDI joined the community and victims of the Atiak massacre for the annual memorial prayer that took place at Atiak Sub-County headquarters.

• **Burcoro: April 2019**: On April 27, FJDI joined the community of Burcoro in an annual memorial prayer for those that lost their lives on April 18, 1991 during the Burcoro massacre at Burcoro Primary School.

• **Odek: March 2019**: On April 29, FJDI supported and attended the annual memorial prayer of the 2004 Odek Massacre in Odek Sub-county organized by the community members.

• **Lukodi: May 2019**: On May 19, FJDI joined the community of Lukodi and survivors of the massacre in the 15th annual memorial prayer for the 2004 Lukodi massacre victims.

• **Obalanga: June 2019**: On June 15, three staff and one intern attended the annual memorial prayer day in Obalanga, Teso Sub-region in remembrance of those who died in the LRA massacre.

• **Ombaci: June 2019**: On June 24, three staff and one intern joined the community of Ombaci as they commemorated the 1981 massacre that took place at Ombokoro catholic parish in Manibe Sub-county, Arua district.

• **Mucwini: July 2019**: On July 24, 2019, three staff from FJDI attended an annual memorial prayer in Mucwini. The annual memorial prayer took place in Pajong where the technical school is being constructed in memory of the 56 people who were killed in the massacre.

• **Namokora: August 2019**: On August 19 2019, three staff attended the annual memorial prayer of the 1986 massacre in Namokora Kitgum district.

• **Kabwele: September 2019**: On the September 19, 2019, three staff from FJDI attended the annual memorial commemoration in Kabwele, Kumi District, Teso Sub-region.

**Project 2: Access to Justice Project**

FJDI’s access to justice program aims at helping communities to participate in ongoing justice proceedings by providing periodic updates and information relating to trials. In northern Uganda, the trials of Dominic Ongwen before the ICC in The Hague, and that of Thomas Kwoyelo before the ICD in Uganda dominated FJDI’s access to justice programming during the year.

**Monitoring the Trial of Dominic Ongwen**

Under its Access to Justice Programme, FJDI in partnership with other stakeholders monitored the trials of former LRA commanders Dominic Ongwen and Thomas Kwoyelo. The trials are occurring simultaneously before the ICC in The Hague, and the ICD in Uganda. Ongwen is charged with 70 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the former IDP camps of Lukodi, Pajule, Odek, and Abok in northern Uganda. His trial at the ICC, which began in 2016, is now in advanced stages, with closing
arguments scheduled for this March. Kwoyelo is facing 93 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed between January 1995 and December 2005 in northern Uganda. The main phase of his trial started on September 24, 2018.

FJDI monitored both Ongwen and Kwoyelo’s trials in partnership with the Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI) and the ICC, Avocats Sans Frontieres (ASF) and other stakeholders. Monitoring activities included gauging public opinion in northern Uganda and writing corresponding blog articles which were published on the International Justice Monitor (IJM) Website, attending trial sessions – especially in Uganda, and participation in community outreaches.

**Gauging Public Opinion**
In partnership with the OSJI, FJDI gauged public opinion in northern Uganda regarding the trial of Dominic Ongwen. This resulted in the production of 24 blog articles which were published on the International Justice Monitor website. All articles can be accessed at: [www.ijmonitor.org](http://www.ijmonitor.org)

**Community Screenings and Radio Listening Clubs**

In partnership with the ICC under the ‘Access to Justice Programme’ FJDI implemented various community outreach programs aimed at keeping communities informed of proceedings in the trial of Dominic Ongwen. From August - December 2019, FJDI conducted 6 community screening events, and 6 radio listening clubs as follows:

- On August 27, 2019, two staff from FJDI carried out a radio listening club in Cuk-Alot (Layibi Division).
- On September 5, 2019, a team from FJDI conducted a video screening in Layibi College. The screening was attended by approximately 310 people.
- On September 25, 2019, two staff and an intern student for FJDI conducted screening in Laroo. The activity started at 3:00 PM and was attended by around 400 people.
On September 26, 2019, two staff together with an intern conducted a radio listening club at Laroo site located in Obia Highland.

On October 22, a team from FJDI carried out a video screening on the trial of Dominic Ongwen in Cuk Te-labolo, Agwee parish, Laroo Division. The screening was attended by around 150 people.

On October 29, FJDI staff carried out a radio listening club at Cuk Te-labolo in Laroo Division- Gulu. The gathering was attended by over 60 community members.

On November 21, a team carried out a video screening on the trial of Dominic Ongwen in Laroo Division, Forest Sub-Ward, Cuk Dire. It was attended by 380 people.

On November 29, a team conducted a radio listening exercise in Cuk-Dire, Laroo division on the trial of Dominic Ongwen at the International Criminal Court (ICC). An estimated 50 community members attended.

On December 9, a team carried out video screening in Pece Division at Pece Primary School. An estimated 350-430 attended the event.

On December 13, a team carried out a radio listening activity in Pece division at Pece Primary School. About 60-80 people attended—women, men, children and youths.

**Training on trial monitoring by ICC and ASF**

On August 20, a staff attended a training organized by the ICC. The training was meant to orient the focal point persons from the four case locations on the Access to Justice Project Phase II.

**Training on trial monitoring by ASF**

On September 3, 2019, three FJDI staff received training on the methodology of trial monitoring conducted by an Avocats San Frontiers’ (ASF) trial monitoring expert based in Brussels.

**ICC Information Sessions**

On July 23, 2019, FJDI staff attended an ICC joint defense/registry informative session with stakeholders at Gulu Churchill Courts hotel. The meeting was meant to give updates on Ongwen’s defense progress. On October 21, 2019, two staff attended a half-day stakeholders’ informative meeting addressed by a team from the ICC Office of the Prosecutor.

**Monitoring the Trial of Thomas Kwoyelo**

FJDI actively participated in monitoring the trial of Thomas Kwoyelo throughout the year. Kwoyelo is facing 93 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed between January 1995 and December 2005 in northern Uganda. The main phase of his trial started on September 24, 2018. The first two
prosecution witnesses **testified** from March 12 to 14, 2019. From July 1 to 18, the court heard **testimony** from five additional prosecution witnesses. The seventh and eighth prosecution witnesses **appeared** from September 30 to October 3. From October 7 to 10, two more prosecution testified, and afterwards the trial was **postponed** indefinitely due to a disagreement between the defense and the prosecution over the use of closed sessions. In December 2019, the trial **resumed** before the ICD sitting at the High Court in Kampala, however, proceedings could not take place due to the absence of Kwoyelo, the court assessors, interpreters, and witnesses. Kwoyelo’s absence was due to the non-issuance of a production warrant to the Uganda prison authorities, while the absence of the court assessors, interpreters, and witnesses was due lack of funds to travel to Kampala. For this reason, judges adjourned the trial to January 2020. Kwoyelo’s trial has been characterized by several delays which resulted in numerous postponements. FJDI attended over 17 court sessions and produced monitoring reports which were published on the on the International Justice Monitor website. All articles can be accessed at: **www.ijmonitor.org**

Building Synergy to Monitor Kwoyelo’s Trial

On March 12, FJDI hosted a meeting on the ‘Kwoyelo Initiative’ to bring together organizations like the Refugee Law Project (RLP), ASF and FJDI to explore ways of building synergies on the work the different organizations do regarding the trial and identify areas of collaboration. As a way forward, the organizations present pledged to share information among each other and identify areas for research to inform policy at the national level.

Training on Trial Monitoring by Justice Rapid Response

On the October 9, 2019, a staff attended a witness protection training organized by Justice Rapid Response - a Kenyan based NGO currently supporting the ICD court of Uganda. Participants were able to obtain basic training on how to handle a witness’ needs such as psychosocial, security and welfare.

Community Outreach

On April 24 and 25, 2019, a staff joined a team from ASF, ICTJ and the ICD for community outreaches in Pabbo. The outreaches were conducted in the villages of Obiangic and Perechu (day one) and Pagak Primary School, Lamogi and Pabbo Sub-county headquarters which are case locations in the trial of Thomas Kwoyelo.

On April 26, FJDI in partnership with ASF, ICTJ and ICD organized a public dialogue and information session on the trial of Dominic Ongwen and Kwoyelo Thomas at the Gulu District Council Hall.

On June 14, 2019, FJDI attended an information/outreach session at Gulu District Council Hall organized by the ICD Court of Uganda. The outreach attracted more than 75 participants, most of whom were men.
Advocacy and Networking

Advocacy plays a significant role in FJDI’s work and is significant for influencing public opinion, public policy and drawing attention to various issues that still need to be addressed in post-conflict northern Uganda. Advocacy ensures that FJDI’s activities are visible and known to the public, thereby creating a support base and audience for the promotion of the organization’s activities. Through internal and external visits, meetings, workshops and other events, FJDI can articulate victims’ concerns, interests and needs. Our advocacy events in 2019 rotated around two main pillars: external visits to FJDI and attendance and participation in meetings and other networking events.

Learning Exchange Visits

FJDI has continued to offer platforms for learning in northern Uganda. This is evidenced by visits from individuals, CSOs and institutions both within and outside the country. FJDI hosted 2 learning exchange visits, and over 1000 visitors to the Lukodi Community memory Center. Details of the visits are provided as follows;

Learning Visit by University of Manchester
On January 14, 2019 a team of 20 students and a tutor from England based University of Manchester- Institute of Humanitarian and Conflict Response paid a visit to FJDI offices. On April 4, 2019, FJDI hosted another 25 students of International Studies from the University of Manchester.

Over 400 People Including the German Ambassador to Uganda Visit the Lukodi Memory Center
In 2019, FJDI received over 400 documented visitors to the Lukodi Community Memory Center. Undocumented visitors were estimated at 600. During the week of April 15-19, FJDI and the community of Lukodi hosted the German Ambassador to Uganda, H.E Dr Albrecht Conze and visitors from the Uganda Museum to the Lukodi community memory centre.

Participation in Workshops, Meetings and Advocacy Events

During this reporting period, FJDI attended various workshops, meetings and other advocacy events. At these workshops, FJDI continued to present perspectives from conflict-affected communities in northern Uganda. FJDI participated in 28 in-country workshops, meetings and advocacy events and 3 international events. A summary of the workshops/events is presented below;

International Networking

Rwanda, Kigali: CSO Consultations on ICC Investigations
On October 17, 2019, FJDI attended a civil society consultation in Rwanda, Kigali, organized by a Burundian NGO called SOS-Torture. The objective of the workshop was to provide a platform for CSO actors from countries that had experienced ICC investigations to share their experience with Burundian activists who support the work of the ICC.

Belgium, Brussels: Networking Forum on Current Trends in TJ
From 21 to 25 October 2019, FJDI, represented by the Director participated in a workshop organized by Avocats Sans Frontieres (ASF) in Brussels, Belgium. The objective of the workshop was to bring together ASF staff and other technocrats and brainstorm on current trends in the field of transitional justice.
New York, USA: AHDA Fellowship

From July to December 2019, the FJDI Head of Office attended the Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability (AHDA) fellowship in New York, United State of America.

Research and documentation

Profiling of Victims’ Groups & Associations in Northern Uganda

FJDI conducted an extensive survey on victim’s capacity needs and their opinion on a regional/national day of memory. The assessment also analyzed the general structure of the groups, leadership issues and current economic and social activities. A total number of 32 groups where assessed and the findings indicated minimal stability in some groups and several challenges in most of the groups some of which included lack of office structures, lack of financial support, stigmatization, lack of capacity to advocate for their needs.
Partnerships & Collaborations

Light for the World-FJDI Partnership
During the year, FJDI collaborated with an NGO called Light for the World. Light for the World is a Non-Governmental Organization that advocates for the rights of people with disability. The partnership was intended to mainstream disability inclusion in FJDI's programming and organizational structure.

ASF-FJDI Partnership
In 2019, FJDI partnered with Avocats Sans Frontiers (ASF) in monitoring the trial of Thomas Kwoyelo.

ICC-FJDI partnership
FJDI partnered with the International Criminal Court (ICC) to conduct community screenings and radio programs aimed at disseminating information and keeping the public informed about the trial of Dominic Ongwen.

Lukodi Community –FJDI partnership
In 2019, FJDI moved to build rapport and strengthen its partnership with the community of Lukodi with the main objective of acquiring space for expansion of the memory center. In line with this, FJDI held several meetings with the community members in Lukodi to advocate for a piece of land on which a new memory center could be constructed. As a positive outcome of these meetings, FJDI managed to acquire land in Lukodi.

Lukodi Community Members and FJDI team tour the site offered for memorial initiatives
Conclusion

Notable landmarks were made in the advancement of transitional justice in the year 2019. These included, among others, significant progress in the trials of Dominic Ongwen and Thomas Kwoyelo. Many challenges however remain. For victims in northern Uganda, the focus priorities of the government and donors seem to have shifted away from them, and as a result, many continue to struggle, and victims’ associations strive to remain visible and relevant. Areas such as memory and memorialization have been left to CSOs and victims’ associations. FJDI’s programming in 2020 will therefore continue to focus on strengthening victims’ associations and promoting their visibility, in addition to strengthening memorial initiatives in northern Uganda.

Our Donors

FJDI’s work in 2019 was made possible with the support of the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Robert Bosch Stiftung