All We Need Are Answers: Prevailing Transitional Justice Issues and Actors in Uganda
Acknowledgement

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RFPJ and FJDI thank their staff who facilitated the profiling meetings in the regions and at the national level. Special thanks to the Executive director RFPJ and FJDI for editing the report.

Cover photograph: A community member of Abok makes a submission on the need for reparations during a community engagement in Oyam district, northern Uganda.

Photo Credit: FJDI
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List of Abbreviations
LRA Lord’s Resistance Army
ADF Allied Democratic Force
JLOS Justice Law and Order sector
TJ Transitional Justice
NRM National Resistance Movement
NTJP National Transitional Justice Policy
CSO Civil Society Organizations
HRDP National Human Rights Documentation Project
NGOs Non-Governmental Organizations
UPDF Uganda People’s Defence Forces
UNLF Uganda National Rescue Front
About Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice (RFPJ)

Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice (RFPJ) is a Civil Society Organization established in 2002 to act as a convergence of synergies to foster Sustainable Peace, Nonviolence and Respect for Human Rights. Legally registered with National NGO Board to operate in Uganda, RFPJ seeks to prevent violence and build an infrastructure that can support sustainable peace and realization of rights. Specifically, RFPJ’s mandate rotates around; Creating and strengthening spaces for Citizens, Government, CSOs, Private Sector and Development Partners to engage and foster values of peace and nonviolence; Building Capacities of Member Organizations, community peacebuilding structures, Partners and other Stakeholders in Peace Building and Conflict Management and; Researching and sharing Information to inform Peace Building and Conflict Management work.

About the Foundation for Justice and Development Initiatives (FJDI)

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 redress of human rights violations and atrocities committed during the conflict, implementation of sustainable development initiatives, and promotion of economic empowerment through livelihood programs.
Executive summary

In fulfilment of the agreed upon pillars of accountability, justice and reconciliation enshrined in the 2007 Juba Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation, the cabinet of the Government of Uganda, in June 2019, approved the National Transitional Justice Policy (NTJP). The approval by cabinet paves way for the development of a transitional justice bill by Uganda’s parliament, and the implementation of transitional justice policies to resolve Uganda’s violent past. With the approval of the policy, victims of Uganda’s violent past hope that accountability, justice and reconciliation will be attained. In recognition of the evolving TJ issues and actors, RFPJ and FJDI conducted a profiling exercise within the Rwenzori, and Northern Uganda regions, and at the national level to profile pending TJ issues.

Objective of the profiling exercise

The overarching objective of the profiling exercise was to take stock of important regional and national TJ issues with a purpose of building consensus on these issues that still need to be addressed. Further, the exercise was aimed at taking stock of TJ actors to build regional and national coalitions meant to further victim-centred TJ. By profiling regional and national TJ issues and actors, this profiling report serves as a resource for players in the TJ arena in furthering victim-responsive TJ in Uganda.

Key Findings

The profiling exercise indicated that whereas the passing of the TJ policy was a show of commitment by the Ugandan government to the agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation that was signed during the Juba Peace process, as well as its constitutional obligation to provide an effective remedy to victims of human rights violations, a lot that remains outstanding to actualize its implementation. Stakeholders identified a number of gaps including: the lack of knowledge on the policy, its delayed implementation, and the omission of initiatives to track missing persons from Uganda’s numerous conflicts. Further, stakeholders criticized the continued lack of accountability and impunity, selective pursuit of formal justice, documentation on human rights violation, selective reparations schemes, and absence of memory and memorialization initiatives. Other issues of concern raised were the neglect of victims of conflict, politicization and ethnicization of TJ, failed reconciliation, and lack of deliberate efforts to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate former fighters.

Against the above findings, stakeholder emphasised the need to kick-start the implementation of the TJ policy. That JLOs as the lead implementer of the policy together with other relevant agencies should expedite the dissemination and sensitization of citizens on the policy to set the ball rolling in regards to implementation of the policy that some participants said is already gathering ‘dust’.
Introduction:

Uganda’s pre-colonial and colonial dispensations were enveloped in intricate social, economic and political crises. In the pre-colonial setup, chiefdoms and traditional rulers in almost every part of the country wielded absolute power and masterminded injustices against minority ethnic groups. Some of these injustices triggered unprecedented wars such as the Abayora (1919-1921) and Rwenzururu (1962-1982) rebellions where minority Bamba, Babwisi and Bakonzo ethnic groups rebelled against the Tooro Kingdom hegemony in western Uganda.

The advent of missionaries and colonial rule in Uganda found an already fragile society and amplified these fragilities to entrench colonial rule. Specifically, colonial rulers easily employed a divide and rule system and relied on indirect rule to easily conquer big and smaller kingdoms within the current Ugandan State. Since attaining independence in 1962, Uganda has not had a peaceful transfer of power. Rather, the country has intermittently witnessed an intractable pattern of violent conflicts that has since left the country disunited and at the brink of more violence. Notable conflicts and crises that have left a trail of victims include the 1966 Buganda Crisis and the 1971-1979 bloody regime of Idi Amin Dada following the 1971 military coup against Obote I government. Amin’s reign was characterised by nation-wide assassinations of over two thousand real and/or perceived political opponents and enemies.

The post-Amin government of Obote II (1981-1985) never reversed the killing spree and in a bid to restore stability, orchestrated political instabilities and associated costs on Ugandans. Within this regime, the 1980 – 1985 Uganda National Rescue Front I (UNRF I) war in West Nile erupted. Also in 1985, the National Resistance Army (NRA) launched a guerrilla war against the Obote II government and later, that of General Tito Lutwa Okello. This five-year war saw an unprecedented massacre of over one million civilians in the Luwero Triangle and other parts of the country. Since the NRA/National Resistance Movement (NRM) take over in 1986, the country has at different times experienced intractable conflicts like the 1986 - 1994 National Army for Liberation of Uganda (NALU) war in South Western Uganda; the Uganda People’s Army (UPA) insurgency in Eastern Uganda in 1987; the 1986-1997 Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Lakwena in northern Uganda; the 1986 todate Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) rebellion in northern Uganda; the 1990s UNLF I & II and West Nile Bank Front war in West Nile and; the 1994 to date Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) insurgencies in Western Uganda.

The NRA/NRM regime has also been punctuated by worst incidents of unresolved killings like the Mukura incident in Teso region where the 106th battalion of the NRA allegedly rounded up three hundred men and incarcerated them in a train wagon. Other incidents include state and non-state inspired violence against perceived enemies resulting into extra-judicial killings and maiming of civilians. These include the Buganda riots in 2009 following a bitter dispute between the central government and Buganda
Kingdom over the King’s planned visit to Kayunga district. Other incidents include the nation-wide killing of Muslim clerics, civil servants as well as raping and killing of women and other citizens mainly within the central region of Uganda between 2015 and 2019, and election-related disputes between the NRM and the opposition since 2011. The latest national crisis was the 2016 violent attack on the palace of the Òbusinga Bwa Rwenzururu cultural institution in western Uganda by the Uganda People’s Defence Forces leaving over one hundred civilians dead and scores more injured.

Confronted with a violent past, Uganda has grappled with the notion of TJ. Past TJ initiatives in Uganda include: The 1971-1974 Commission of inquiry into the disappearances of persons in Uganda (believed to be the first truth commission in the world) established by the then President Idi Amin; The Commission of inquiry into violation of human rights (Oder Commission), 1986-1994, established by President Yoweri K. Museveni, to inquire into human rights violations between December 1962 – January 1986); The Amnesty Act of 2000 aimed at ending rebel insurgencies in the country, and; The Juba Peace Process from 2006- 2008 aimed at ending the 20 year conflict in Northern Uganda between the Government of Uganda and the LRA. Further, after a decade-long discussion, in 2019, Uganda finally passed a National Transitional Justice Policy (NTJP) which provides a ray of hope for victims of past and recent conflicts in their noble pursuit of justice. The NTJP addresses the legal and institutional framework for investigations, prosecutions, trials within the formal system, reparations and alternative justice approaches. These matters are clustered into five key areas namely: formal justice, traditional justice, nation building and reconciliation, amnesty and reparations. The ultimate goal of the NTJP is to pave the way towards achieving peace, stability and social cohesion in Uganda.

Today’s NTJP has its roots in the Juba Peace process that among other provisions, called for the promotion of national legal arrangements consisting of formal and non-formal institutions and measures for ensuring justice and reconciliation. The drafting of this policy which started in around 2008 involved a consultative, participatory and inclusive process undertaken by the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS). JLOS engagements led to the establishment of the International Crimes Division of the High Court in 2008 and the passing of the International Criminal Court Act in 2010.

National TJ initiatives notwithstanding, Uganda’s turbulent past remains unresolved and yet, it informs the present and future stability of the country. The truth surrounding past violent conflicts and associated costs on human life and property remains scanty and shrouded in uncertainty about who was responsible. The country has not satisfactorily invested in victim-centred post-conflict nation building, reconciliation and pursuit of justice. The pursuit of international and national formal justice has tended to focus more on selective trials of non-state actors, leaving state actors to go free and allowing the culture of impunity to thrive. Further, reliance on this formal justice system, justified as it may be, has relegated traditional justice mechanisms to the periphery, served to exclude victims and failed to meet victims’ needs and interests.
While the national dialogue and reconciliation processes under the auspices of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda and the Elders’ Forum of Uganda established in 2009 presents an opportunity for Uganda to come to terms with its violent past, this process remains unstructured, unbinding and hybrid. Further, grassroots TJ actors remain excluded, setting a pace for a national level processes to continue without the much needed local legitimacy and victim participation.

Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice (RFPJ) and Foundation for Justice and Development Initiatives (FJDI) conducted profiling in January 2021 with an aim of taking stock of TJ actors including CSOs, pressure groups and community organisations for purposes of setting a background for building regional and national coalitions meant to further victim-centred TJ. Further, the profiling focused on taking stock of important regional and national TJ issues and building consensus on these issues that need to be addressed. The profiling exercising was conducted in the Rwenzori and northern regions of Uganda by RFPJ/FJDI staff and volunteers. This report outlines findings on key TJ issues and actors, and provides recommendations on how to realize a victim responsive TJ in Uganda.

**Objective of the profiling exercise**
The profiling exercises had two specific objectives:

- To take stock of TJ actors including CSOs, pressure groups and community organisations for purposes of setting a background for building regional and national coalitions meant to further victim-centred TJ.
- To take stock of prevailing regional and national TJ issues and build consensus on these issues that need to be addressed.

**Methodology**
Following the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) put in place by the Government and Ministry of Health, RFPJ and FJDI organized four regional stakeholder meetings to profile the TJ issues and actors in the two regions of Rwenzori and northern Uganda. For the Rwenzori region, the meetings were conducted across six districts of Kasese, Kabarole, Ntoroko, Bunyangabu, Kyenjojo and Bundibugyo.

In the north meetings were centrally held in the districts of Gulu and Lira bringing together stakeholders from the Acholi, Lango, Teso and West Nile. In addition to the regional meetings, RFPJ and FJDI conducted a national level meeting in Kampala to further take stock of important regional and national TJ issues and build consensus on the issues.

The meetings brought together over 350 stakeholders including victims of conflicts, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), members of the Amnesty Commission, Members of Parliament, Judiciary, Uganda Human Rights Commission, elders, women and youth representatives, religious as well as political leaders.
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Stakeholders engaged during the profiling exercise by gender

Overview of profiled issues
Following the regional and national level profiling meetings, stakeholders built consensus around key TJ issues that need to be addressed to foster victim responsive Transitional Justice (TJ) in Uganda. Consensus was built on the following:

Lack of accountability and impunity:
Stakeholders in both regions decried the lack of accountability for grave human rights violations against citizens and the high level of impunity by perpetrators of violence/conflict. In the Rwenzori region, victims cited what many commonly refer to as the “Kasese Massacre”, the 2016 intervention at the palace of the Rwenzururu King Charles Wesley Mumbere where the state intervened leading to the death of over 100 people. “No one has come out to account for the deaths that occurred at the palace, many women were left widows with children to take care of...who do we run to for accountability?” a widow remarked. Despite Dominic Ongwen being convicted for 61 out of the 70 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the February 4th 2021 judgement by judges at the International Criminal Court (ICC), victims of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) war continue to demand for accountability.

Profiling sample sites, January 2021.

[Map showing districts where the profiling meetings were conducted]
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“There were so many parties involved in the LRA war, government inclusive. How do we ensure accountability for crimes committed by government soldiers”? said a victim representative from Lira.

“Yes, we have seen some of the LRA commanders like Dominic Ongwen, and Thomas Kwoyelo, Jamil Mukulu and Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere paraded before courts of law, but how about the UPDF commanders who were known for committing certain atrocities and the information is known

The participant further affirmed that the above are some of the things that some people may not want to hear, but without it, the true meaning of Transitional Justice cannot be realized. It was mentioned that the formal justice system takes so long and the approach seems to discourage most victim communities. In the Rwenzori region participants alluded to the recent arrest and detention of the King of the Rwenzururu Kindgom, His Highness Charles Wesley Mumbere with his royal guards leaving out government actors as a case in point. Otim a victim’s representative from Pabbo, said that he looks at justice in Uganda as a one sided justice
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Lack of information on the TJ policy:
Following the Juba peace talks in which the government of Uganda was called upon to promote both formal and informal mechanisms to address the past gross human rights violations that were committed during the conflict in greater northern Uganda, in 2012 the Government of Uganda under the leadership of the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) and Transitional Justice Working Group embarked on a process of developing a National Transitional Justice Policy. The Policy was to provide for both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms which include; prosecutions, truth seeking, reparations programmes, and traditional justice mechanisms among others. After a series of back and forth consultations, in 2019, the Uganda cabinet approved the National Transitional Justice Policy (NTJP) to help respond to the country’s violent past. Unfortunately, its implementation is still at the infant stages. During the profiling exercise, stakeholders echoed the limited knowledge on the policy. In the Rwenzori region, the lack of knowledge has in a number ways deprived victims of conflict access to justice. Contrary to the Rwenzori region, participants in the north who had some knowledge of the policy said there is need for the policy to become an ACT of Parliament. “For a long time, there have been efforts to ensure that this policy becomes an ACT of the Ugandan parliament but there have been delays…Having the policy an ACT of parliament could help the victims who have gone through different problems” remarked Stella Lanam, director War Victims and Children Networking (WVCN). Further, to ensure that the policy is understood widely, emphasis was placed on the need to have the document translated.

Delayed implementation of the TJ policy:
Participants at both national and regional meetings raised concerns on the delay in the implementation of the policy. “Imagine the time it took to develop the policy… from 2012 the policy was only passed in 2019, how much time will it take for it to be implemented if getting it to become an ACT of parliament is still a problem” said a victim representative from Teso. The delayed implementation of the policy on the side of government has been compounded by the shrinking space for the CSOs to complement government in ensuring aspects of the policy are implemented.

“To me the TJ policy is a pain killer for victims whereby whenever the victim starts feeling the pain, they are told that there is a policy in place to cool them. So why is the implementation of the policy being delayed? We need to accelerate implementation of the policy by putting pressure on the government to ensure that the people who lost hope are attended to.”

Steven Acidri, a victims’ representative Arua District, West Nile
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“The lack of dissemination of the policy itself is an indicator that the implementation itself may be poor…Because once there is readiness to disseminate the policy, it implies that there is also readiness to start answering questions around the implementation”

-Chris Ongom, Uganda Victims Foundation

Neglect of Victims and Vulnerable Groups Such Female Ex-LRA Abductees and Children Born in Captivity:

Many victims and civil society representatives who participated in the profiling exercise felt there had been a gross neglect of conflict victims. Despite Uganda’s conflict past, there has never been an exercise to register victims and understand their needs and situations. Government programs such as the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF I, II, and III) were criticised by many victims as too generic and focusing on the overall war-affected population without direct benefits for victims who suffered. As a result, many victims are growing old and others dying off before they receive any reparations from the Government.

The failure to acknowledge and recognize the existence of victims of various grave human rights violations across the country has left victims at the mercy of non-governmental agencies and the international community. In northern Uganda, many civil society representatives highlighted the need to pay attention to vulnerable groups such as ex-LRA female abductees, and children born in captivity. Ex-LRA female abductees were noted to be suffering due to rejection and stigmatization of their children by their families. They are also denied access to land as a valuable resource necessary for their livelihoods. As a result, many ex-LRA female abductees resorted to living in town areas away from their homes. Children born in captivity are said to have difficulty in accessing services such as processing national identity cards and passports, which often requires them to specify their paternal roots. Furthermore, psychosocial support and rehabilitation services for conflict survivors was noted to be lacking. To adequately respond to victim’s needs, there is need for a concerted effort by both the societies in which they live and government.

Missing Persons from Conflicts:

Participants in northern Uganda raised concerns on the issue of the missing persons from the conflict. “The current TJ policy is silent about this,” said Christopher a victim’s representative from Arua, West Nile. He also added that, much as many CSOs like the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) took time to document and register thousands of missing persons, the issue hasn’t clearly reflected in the TJ policy. “What happens to families whose loved ones are missing to-date?” he asked. He recommended that there is need to ensure that it is spelt out properly in the policy.

Distorted truth, and the aspect of truth-telling in the National TJ Policy:

Uganda has for long been embroiled in conflicts. From the Abayola, Rwenzururu rebellion and National Army for the Liberation of Uganda to the National Resistance Army military take over and the LRA war, there is no clear information on who did what and at what point. Everyone has a different narrative to the conflicts that happened.
Without a single narrative it has proved difficult to engage people in truth-telling and reconciliation of victims and perpetrators of Uganda’s violent past. Furthermore, respondents also pointed out that earlier drafts of the NTJP had included truth-telling as a stand-alone component, but wondered why this aspect had been changed to ‘Reconciliation and Nation Building’. Many participants pointed out the need to pursue a national process of truth-seeking aimed at establishing the truth behind Uganda’s violent past, and subsequently reconciling the country.

Undeveloped informal justice system:
Whereas victims of conflicts in the northern region have somewhat benefited from the existence of a strong informal justice system where victims and perpetrators are reconciled and rehabilitated, the Rwenzori region has undeveloped informal justice system leaving victims to the long, expensive and tedious process of the formal justice system. Many have been frustrated and have often given up the hope of attaining justice from violations they faced during conflicts in the region. Furthermore, the linkage between formal and traditional justice mechanisms remains unspecified. Given the significance of traditional justice mechanisms, there is need to articulate this linkage.

Unstructured reparations:
In communities that have suffered and are recovering from gross human rights violations, it is important that the violations committed by warring parties, be it state or non-state actors are addressed through reparations. These can take the form of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, material or moral reparations. During the profiling meetings, the aspect of reparations stood high on the list of communities affected by conflict. Because victims of conflicts are uniquely affected, some put forward the need for both individual and collective reparations. Unfortunately, it was emphasized that reparations schemes in Uganda are very unstructured. “Here in the Rwenzori region, reparation promises are made during election time when it benefits those who seek election into positions of leadership.” Remarked a representative of victims of the ADF. In the north, participants mentioned that the aspect of reparations in the TJ policy has a very narrow description because it does not succinctly define what reparations victims are entitled to. This, they said, may lead to a lot of frustration among victims of conflict.

It is very unfortunate that many of the government development programs like PRDP and NUSAf are considered to be reparations and yet they don’t speak to the needs of victims of conflict

-Victim from Awach Sub-county, Gulu District
Limited memory and memorialization initiatives:

Memory and memorialization initiatives often have a dual purpose. First is that it educates the younger generations, about the dangers of conflict, thus reducing the risk of their recurrence, and secondly foster a sense of identity among communities that were affected by conflict. Unfortunately, in the Rwenzori region there are dotted memorials like the ADF monument at the seminary in Kasese and Kichwamba technical school in Kabarole. In northern Uganda, a number of memorials were erected by NGOs and victims communities, who also commemorate days on which massacres occurred. The above have not served their intended purpose because of lack of involvement of victims and willingness of government to support the initiatives. During the meetings, victims called for a single national day of memory to commemorate victims of Uganda’s violent past. “We need a memorial museum here in Kasese to tell our young ones what we the elders went through” said a victim of the Rwenzururu rebellion.

Failed reconciliation:

To build sustainable peace in the country, stakeholders emphasized the need to deliberately create processes aimed at national reconciliation. Suggestions were that a committee be formed to organize a national platform for all actors engaged in reconciliation and peace building activities from the different regions of the country. Emphasis was placed on building consensus on how and what the national reconciliation process in Uganda might look like. Stakeholders had divergent views echoing the several impediments that the process might encounter. Such impediments were said to take different forms. “In Uganda there is what is called elimination method, whereby when anyone comes out to tell the truth, he/she will not be able to see the sun rise the next time” and another is ethnicity.
Politization and Ethnicization of TJ issues:
In the Rwenzori, TJ issues have overly been politicized and ethnicized by locals. Politicians have used aspects of TJ as platforms for re-election and given the ethnic diversity, when interventions are directed to a certain ethnic group because of the impact of conflict it suffered it is ethnicized. In the north stakeholder mentioned that inter-tribal and land conflicts have been undermined in the TJ policy, an aspect that is creating a lot of victims currently.

Lack of deliberate efforts to disarm, demobilize and re-integrate former fighters.
During the profiling meetings, stakeholders in the north mentioned that there were deliberate efforts to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate combatants, unlike in the Rwenzori region were reports indicated that many former fighters and the royal guards caught up in the recent 2016 military intervention on the Rwenzururu King Charles Wesley Mumbere’s palace have not adequately been disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated. This was said about ex-combatants of various conflicts like Rwenzururu rebellion in the region.

Inadequate documentation on human rights violations
In 2015, the government of Uganda launched the National Human Rights Documentation Program (HRDP) to document gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law that were committed during conflicts in Uganda between 1987 and 2006. Tasked by the Justice and Law Order Sector (JLOS), the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) spearheaded the implementation of the HRDP. The HRDP is intended to contribute to the country’s Transitional Justice process.

The HRDP’s main purpose was to document the causes, scale, patterns, and consequences of conflict-related gross human rights abuses and serious violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). It further sought to create a historical record of the conflict in accordance with the provision of the Juba Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation, which calls for a “comprehensive, independent, and impartial analysis of the history and manifestations of the conflict, especially the human rights violations and crimes committed during the conflict,” as an essential aspect for attaining reconciliation at all levels.
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During the national level meeting, stakeholders expressed concerns on the implementation of the HRDP. It was said that the project experienced significant delays. “The original mandate of the National Human Rights Documentation Project (HRDP) had been indefinitely suspended” Remarked one of the participants. Another participant further expressed concern that; “From my knowledge of the HRDP, JLOS had instructed the HRDP to map all conflicts in Uganda from 1986 until 2017 and finalize a report in August 2017, thus restricting the project to a mapping, instead of a more comprehensive documentation process” another added. Not only was HRDP’s scope of work reduced, it was also significantly behind schedule.

However, a representative from Uganda Human Rights Commission informed participants that documentation was done and there is a draft report that will be published soon. The representative noted that beyond the HRDP, a lot of documentations were done by different CSOs, and the documentation project undertaken by UHRC was the first official documentation led by the government on what transpired but needed to be harmonized with other documentation efforts to have a national outlook.

Overview of Key TJ actors

Stakeholders in the profiling meetings identified victims, cultural and religious leaders, academia, district officials, the Uganda Human Rights Commission, the judiciary, Amnesty Commission, media, security agencies, prisons and NGOs as some of the key actors in the realization of TJ for victims in Uganda. The table below shows the actors, what they ought to do and what they are doing in furthering TJ.

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<tr>
<th>TJ actor</th>
<th>What they ought to do</th>
<th>What they are doing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Victims and Victims’ Associations</td>
<td>• Serve as witnesses in ongoing judicial cases</td>
<td>• Advocating for needs and interests</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advocate for their needs and interest</td>
<td>• Serving as witnesses in on-going judicial cases</td>
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<td>• Participate in truth telling initiatives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Document their conflict experiences</td>
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<td>Leaders (cultural, religious, civil &amp; political)</td>
<td>• Mediation and counseling of conflicting parties</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Advocate for reparations</td>
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<td>• Facilitate reconciliation</td>
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<td>• Policy formulation and implementation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Contribute to documentation of conflict experiences</td>
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| **Media** | • Sensitize communities about TJ processes and mechanisms  
• Information dissemination |
| --- | --- |
| **Security agencies** | • Protect conflicting parties, their families and property  
• Conduct thorough investigation on human rights violations  
• Protect witnesses |
| **Judiciary** | • Prosecute perpetrators of human rights violation |
| **The community** | • Report human rights violations  
• Facilitate reintegration and reconciliation processes |
| **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)** | • Create awareness on the existing TJ policy  
• Provided psychosocial support to victims of conflict  
• Monitor and evaluate projects aimed at rehabilitating victims  
• Facilitate mediation and reconciliation efforts  
• Advocate and lobby on behalf of victims  
• Complement government programs aimed at rehabilitating victims |
| **Institutions of learning** | • Conduct research and documentation around human rights violations  
• Disseminate findings from their research to inform policy |
Challenges and limitations

While the profiling exercise targeted key stakeholders relevant to TJ across the country, RFPJ and FJDI acknowledge some limitations because of the existence of a health pandemic, and political climate at the time.

First, the profiling exercise took place during a period when the regions and country were facing the realities of a health pandemic: Covid-19. Second, because the profiling of issues was done during an electoral period, security was keen on the kind of information generated which in a way prevented the adequate recollection of traumatic experiences faced by victims. It also meant seeking approval in certain incidents where security agencies needed more clarity on the purpose of the meeting.

In light of the above challenges and limitations, RFPJ and FJDI are aware that the profiling exercise may not be regionally or nationally representative. However, it paints a relative good picture on the key TJ issues that stakeholders need to address if the country is to get any semblance of peace and justice.

Recommendations

- At the moment, TJ issues seem to only be discussed at the central level leaving the local government system unaware about what going on. There is need to involve the local government system in the policy dissemination and implementation of the TJ policy
- To kick-start the implementation of the TJ policy, JLOs and the relevant agencies should expedite the dissemination and sensitization of citizens on the policy
- To build consensus on a national reconciliation processes in Uganda, there is need to formulate a committee to spearhead a national reconciliation convention for key actors engaged in reconciliation and peace building activities within Uganda. Further, there is need to pursue a national process of truth-seeking aimed at establishing the truth behind Uganda’s violent past.
- There is need for parliament to pass the TJ policy into law
- There is need for sustained dialogue among key actors around aspects of Transitional Justice
- CSOs and the government should sustain documentation efforts to inform the implementation of TJ issues. In this regard, the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) that previously conducted a national documentation exercise on TJ issues is urged to release the report to the public
- There is need for CSOs to work together with the central and local governments who control resources mandated for TJ.
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- Incorporate aspects of missing persons in the TJ policy
- Given the significance of traditional justice mechanisms, there is need to articulate their linkage with the formal justice system.
- Memory and memorialization initiatives need to be prioritized in the NTJP. In this regard, there is need to institute a national day of memory to commemorate victims of Uganda’s violent past.