

ASIIMWE DEOGRATIAS AKIIKI (2007-M083-10001)

An Analysis of Mechanisms for Monitoring and Reporting Cases of Human Rights Abuses against Women and Children in War Affected Areas of Northern Uganda: A Case Study of Lira District

This study was carried out in order to analyse mechanisms for monitoring and reporting human rights abuses against women and children in war affected areas. The research intended to analyse and describe the mechanism for monitoring and reporting human rights abuses against women and children in Lira district, identifying the gaps, how it is applied, finding out the responses and recommend the way forward basing on the findings so as to improve the way of monitoring, reporting and responding to human rights abuses with specific reference to women and children in war affected areas. The study sample composed of 160 respondents of which 16 were formally abducted children, 48 were mothers and fathers, 32 Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces and Uganda Police Force officers, 12 former LRA fighters, 28 local and opinion leaders, 12 members of human rights networks and 12 government representatives selected randomly. This study describes situations, experiences and opinions of the sampled respondents on the mechanism of monitoring and reporting human rights abuses against women and children in Lira district. The findings show that existing mechanisms have gaps and sometimes not applicable. Whereas, children and women rights violations are reported to elders, local councils, police and some minorities to the probation office and church leaders, a gross number of cases were left unreported based on various circumstances. It was found that most of the reported cases do not get the attention they deserve. The findings also indicated that most women feel it is a cultural taboo to constantly report domestic wrangles even if there are serious abuses to their rights. The findings also show that many more cases remain unmonitored and unreported to the various authorities in place. For children, the findings also show that for most of the sexually abused children, up to 56.8% do not report to anybody for fear of public embarrassment, shyness, fear of the difficulties taking long procedures, the exorbitant cost involved in tracing the perpetrators and threats from the offenders. From the above findings, recommendations are presented briefly including: proper, extensive and repeated training covering a wide range of issues on women and children's rights, creation of children and women's desks at the Police, health centres, and local councils and at the community level, handling of complaints and offences effectively through facilitation and availing the local leaders with the necessary logistics, periodic coordination between agencies working on human rights to review, assess, monitor, evaluate and follow up on the handling of reported cases of abuse and more others as presented in chapter five.

Keywords: Human Rights abuses, Women and Children, Reporting cases, Lira District