

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR

WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION:

Last Name: Brown Gender: Male
First Name: John Okema Father's Name: Odora Eromaci
Other names used: Okeny Aryemo Mother's Name: Abwoyo Mariana
Place of Birth: Acholi-Bur, Pader District Marital Status: Married
Date of Birth/Age: 42; 22 November 1962 Children: Eight children
Place of Residence: Pajule Trading Centre, Pajule IDP Camp, Pader District

Ethnic Origin/Tribe: Acholi

Religion: Catholic

Language(s) Spoken: Acholi, Kiswahili and English

Language(s) Written: Acholi and English

Language(s) Used in Interview: Acholi and English

Current Occupation: Peasant Farmer, Camp Commandant

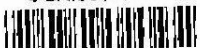
Former Occupations: Peasant Farmer

Place of Interview: [REDACTED] Lira Town, Lira District

Date of Interview: 5, 6, 20 and 21 February 2005

Interviewers: [REDACTED] and Dianne Luping

Interpreter: [REDACTED]



[REDACTED] *W*
[REDACTED] *OJB*

Names of all persons present during Interview: [redacted] Dianne Luping, Okema
John Brown, and [redacted]

Signature(s): [redacted] [redacted]
2/1/02/2005. 2/1/02/05
[redacted] Dianne Luping
2/1/02/05

WITNESS STATEMENT

Procedure

1. I was introduced to [REDACTED] and Dianne Luping and told that they are Investigators with the Office of the Prosecutor ("OTP") of the International Criminal Court (ICC).
2. The investigators explained what the ICC is and described its mandate. They also explained the role and authority of the OTP within the ICC.
3. I was told that this interview is voluntary and that I may end the interview at any time. I confirm that I agreed to answer the investigators' questions of my own free will.
4. I was asked if I had concerns regarding my protection and security. The security measures which are available to me have been explained and any questions posed by me have been answered.
5. I was informed of the existence of the Victims' Participation and Reparation Unit and its function and told that individuals who qualify as victims, in the judgment of the judges, will be entitled to participate in future court proceedings and potentially to receive reparations.
6. I was told that at the conclusion of the interview, I would be asked to sign a written statement after having had the opportunity to review it and add any corrections or additional information.

Background

7. I have been a camp commandant of Pajule sub-county at Pajule IDP camp since 2002 to date; and since 2001, the LC-1 of Aywee village, Palwo parish, Pajule sub-county, Pader district. There is a different camp commandant for Lapul sub-county for Lapul IDP camp. Both Pajule IDP camp and Lapul IDP camp are registered as two different IDP camps by the government. Pajule trading centre is part of both IDP camps. However, for food distribution purposes by the World Food Programme the camps are treated as one camp, namely Pajule-Lapul IDP camp ("camp").
8. I have no specific duties related to security. My job as camp commandant includes dealing with problems with food, outbreak of diseases, and to encourage parents to send their children to school.
9. When there is an attack by the rebels then my assistants and I compile records of those killed, those abducted, huts burnt and items looted for Pajule IDP camp. There are three groups that write these same records, including us. All three groups have their own separate records as required by regulations. My group is



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part of the camp structure. The other two groups who record these same records are the disaster management committee (administrative structure) and the sub-county local council authorities (the LCs). We work together with the LCs and others when compiling our information, although we write our own separate records.

10. In the camp structure, at the Pajule sub-county level there is the camp commandant who is me. There is also a vice camp commandant, the general secretary, women's leader for the camp, and block leaders for each parish (or 'blocks'). There are six parishes of Pajule sub-county at the camp. This is at the sub-county level. The block leader is the leader of the parish group and he has village leaders he works with. The block leader collects information from the village leaders within his parish and then provides this to me, at the sub-county level. The LC structure is similar to the camp structure, but with some differences. Lapul IDP camp also has its own camp structure, and its camp commandant and block leaders who would also have recorded their own information related to the attack. In addition, the disaster management committee and the LCs for Lapul sub-county would also have made a record of information relevant to the attack at the Lapul sub-county side of the camp.

Attack

11. I think that the attacks of 23 January 2003 and 10 October 2003 were the two most severe attacks at the camp.
12. Independence Day is celebrated on 9 October, and it was on the morning of 10 October 2003 just as some people were still celebrating in the camp and some were drunk when the rebels came.
13. I was present during the attack at the camp on 10 October 2003. There are several places I sleep in at the camp, because of my concern that rebels not find where I am living. The hut that I was sleeping in at the time of the attack was near the Lira road. I was with all my children except for one child. My wife and one child were at Kitgum hospital. I only had my other children with me and nobody else. The attack came from all directions in the camp.
14. I could hear shooting first from the direction of the barracks, but I do not know if it was the rebels or UPDF who started shooting at the barracks. I could then hear shooting coming from different directions. This happened between 5 and 6 am. When I heard the gunshots my children and I lay on the floor. I could hear rebels giving instructions "you just abduct, maka maka", and giving instructions to other rebels that they should just shoot the drunkards. I knew then that these were rebels attacking the camp. The rebels did not enter my hut or open the room that I was in with my children.
15. I could hear people shouting names of those who had been abducted. The rebels had started abducting people, looting things and forcing abductees to carry loot as the army who is meant to protect the camp had run away. I was later told by people who had been abducted how they had been forced to carry loot and doors were broken. I could hear the doors being broken as places were being looted. I



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the rebel commanders were resting, to the overall commander of the group for the attack Otti Vincent. Returning abductees had told us that other commanders at the attack included Raska Lukwiya and Charles Tabuley. I recall that Rwot Oywak, Kitara Francis and Okot Dick were amongst abductees I heard say this.

21. Rwot Oywak told us he then begged Otti Vincent to release the abductees. All the abductees slept in the bush with the rebels and on 11 October 2003 at about 11am, Rwot Oywak said that Otti agreed to release some of the abductees. I do not know how many of these abductees were released, but Rwot Oywak told me about 500 had been released. The people who were released were ferried by vehicle. Some were taken to the Caritas reception centre. There were some abductees who escaped when the helicopter came and came back to the camp on their own.
22. Abductees who were released informed us about the release. It was Rwot Oywak who told us that it was Otti Vincent who agreed to release those from his group. The other abductees did not say they knew for themselves that it was Otti Vincent who released them, as the discussion between the Rwot Oywak and Otti Vincent was not in the open.
23. Rwot Oywak also told me that after releasing his group of abductees, Otti Vincent had said he would see how they could release the remaining abductees but that they must first carry the looted things.
24. Abductees continued to escape and come back from the bush. Some returning would report to the office of the LC-3, some would go straight home, and some would run to other camps which are not very far from the camp, such as Pader town council camp, Acholi-Bur, and Corner Kilak. Some got into vehicles and went further to places like Masindi district and Lira district.
25. After the rebels had left the camp, I started moving around to find out where people had died. I first went to the lower side of the camp in Lapul sub-county by the barracks with other sub-county leaders and we found dead bodies. I saw dead bodies lying at a distance of about 10 metres from the barracks. The army did not allow people including us to move closer, so we could not determine which bodies were those of civilians and which were those of the army. There were some amongst the dead outside the barracks wearing civilian clothes. We were told by the army that those outside the barracks, including those wearing civilian clothes, were LRA rebels that the army had killed. When we reached there, the army was already taking the bodies from outside the barracks into the barracks.
26. As one of the camp leaders I was later told by the military that there were civilians amongst the dead killed inside the barracks, as we must know which camp residents are alive or dead. The bodies of the civilians were brought to us from the barracks. I understand that they were killed when the rebels had been throwing bombs inside the barracks. These were the civilians who were killed in the barracks that we were informed about. The army told us there were 11 killed outside the barracks.
27. On the day after the attack, I saw on the upper side to the north of Pajule IDP camp the dead body of a businessman, Onek Pangrasio (about half a kilometre



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from Pajule IDP camp). His body was already swollen. I saw the body after his brother had turned the body around and the body was covered with a blanket. We asked for the blanket to be removed and it was. I saw the dead body was lying sideways. The head was swollen. The body was all bloody so I could not tell where the blood was coming from. The brother told us that before we reached the body the brother had turned round the body and found that Pangrasio had been shot in the back.

28. After this, in the afternoon I saw the dead body of the sub-county typist, Kinyera Lacung. I saw the body in his home, after it had been carried from the bush to his home. The body had been wrapped so I could not see the wounds and I could not see his face. His relatives who brought his body back said that his head had been beaten, and that his body was found about one kilometre away from the Pajule side of the camp where he had been killed. I cannot recall his relatives' names at this moment.
29. We were later told by returning abductees that Lacung had been killed by rebels because he could not carry the load he was given by them. They said the rebels used a club to kill him and brought the club with them. I heard them as they spoke but I cannot recall any of their names. I do not know why Pangrasio was killed.
30. I understand that Pangrasio was later buried by his relatives at the site where he was killed, after his identification, as it is the Acholi culture that if somebody is killed they are not buried at their home compound. I understand that Lacung was buried in the cemetery.
31. There were reports of other dead bodies found in various places near by the camp, on the route taken by the rebels but I did not go to see them myself. But many other camp residents went to check whether these dead people were related to them. By 11 October 2003 I had received information about nine of the dead from Pajule sub-county, which I recorded.
32. The camp residents could not see anybody killed if the bodies were much further along the route taken by the rebels where it was not safe to go further. However, reports were coming back from abductees who returned, about other abductees, who they said had been killed by rebels for example for trying to escape or for not being able to walk any more. I cannot recall the names of any of the returned abductees I heard this from or names of abductees they said they saw killed in this way.
33. Once a dead person was identified we informed relatives that they could bury their dead. I am not certain if this was on the same day of the attack, but it was most likely to have been on the following morning.
34. On the day of the attack, everybody including me was busy checking on their relatives to ensure they were all there. This was when I was starting to receive reports as to who had not been seen and who had been abducted.
35. After checking on my relatives, I went with others to see the huts that were burnt and other things that were destroyed on that day.



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36. When I went to my own home to check the damage caused by the attack, I saw that grass had been pulled from the thatched roof of my hut. My relative, called Obel, who was in this hut of mine during the attack told me that he heard what the rebels were saying when they saw the helicopter. He said that he heard a commander say "you burn the huts so the smoke prevents the helicopter from seeing us". He said that by some good luck, the rebels did not have matches on them to light the grass which they had pulled from my hut to torch it. He said that the rebels had wanted to use the firewood that was burning in the cooking place in my hut, but had dropped the grass and run because of the pressure from the soldiers coming on foot and the helicopter. Returning abductees also said rebels were burning the huts for this same reason. I cannot recall their names.
37. Some days after the attack, a letter was dropped by the rebels stating that if camp residents were still found in the camp by a later date in October 2003 (I think it was about 15 or 25 October) they would be killed. The letter stated that all people should leave the camp and go back to their homes. At that time, some of those who had any cash took their families away to other camps. Others moved to other districts such as Masindi district and Lira district. I read the letter at the LC-3 chairman's office, but I cannot recall who wrote the letter from amongst the rebels. When the rebels write letters they sign which commander has written it. I think the top of the letter had 'LRA' written on it and one of the LRA commanders had signed it.
38. I have not heard of any phone call made by the rebels to any of the soldiers at the military barracks at Pajule, or any letter from the rebels threatening an attack at the camp prior to the attack on 10 October 2003.

Records

39. I attach as annex "A" a list compiled by me of camp residents from the Pajule sub-county side of the camp who were killed on 10 October 2003 by LRA rebels within the camp. The list includes some civilians killed within the Lapul side of the camp if they were Pajule sub-county residents. Otherwise, I do not know how many people died in the Lapul sub-county side of the camp that day. I started compiling this list from 10 October 2003. The first nine names in this list include those civilians killed at the military barracks. I compiled this information by first moving around the camp to identify dead people with block leaders, LCs and others. I would ask those block leaders from Pajule sub-county who I met if any camp residents had died in their ward. Not all block leaders were present as some had been abducted. I was only checking those people killed and other losses at this time, so only wrote this information later when I was in my office rather than when I was going around the camp.
40. The relatives of the dead people were called to come to my office by the block leaders and started coming the day after the attack. I took the details of the nine dead people directly from the relevant block leaders before the relatives had even come to my office. However, the relatives confirmed the details of their dead relatives. The LCs were present when the relative for a dead person would


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confirm the dead person's details including their names, their village, and their age. I wrote down this information in my list. From the name of the village I was able to record the name of the parish, and from the name of the person I was able to record their sex. I had also seen the dead bodies of Onek Pangrasio and Kinyera Lacung for myself.

41. I signed annex "A" on 20 October 2003, when details of nine dead people had been recorded. I believe that eight out of the nine are civilians, although I am only certain of seven of them. I am not certain if Ojok Mathew was a civilian. Oyet Santo was an LDU soldier killed near the barracks. On 21 October 2003 when I went to meet with LC-3 chairman of Pajule sub-county, Mr. Lokilamoi, I was provided by his office with three additional names of those killed. I cannot recall the name of the person from his office who gave me this information. I was told that the bodies of the three dead people were found in the bush after the attack on 10 October 2003, but it was assumed rebels had killed them on the same day of the attack. I am not certain if these three dead people were civilians or soldiers. I obtained annex 'A' from my office, where it was stored.
42. Separate to my records each block leader was instructed and required under regulations to keep records including of those killed. The block leaders should have their own written records of the names, villages, parish, sex, age and names of parents of each of the dead. We have one common office, where each block leader keeps their records in different boxes for different parishes. As a camp commandant I can request this information/ records from block leaders whenever needed.
43. We did not write a list of those who were injured. I do not know how many people were injured. Some of the injured were taken to Caritas, and others were taken to Kitgum hospital. The Pajule dispensary was not in full operation then, but some people were taken there for treatment. There were also some clinics within the camp that treated people with first aid.
44. I did not take any further record of anybody abducted from the camp on 10 October 2003, who was later reported to be killed by rebels. I understand that there is a list of names of the dead related to the 10 October 2003 attack at the LC-3s office, which was compiled for guests attending the commemoration service for victims. I do not know who compiled the list.
45. I attach as annex "B and C" two copies of the same list of numbers of people killed, abducted, huts burnt, and households which had properties looted on 10 October 2003 in the six parishes of Pajule sub-county within Pajule IDP camp. Annex "B and C" reflect a summary of information collected for each parish (block) for Pajule sub-county. As explained my source of information for the numbers of people killed for each parish (block) was not only the block leaders but also from my discussions directly with the relatives of the dead who came to

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my office. I obtained these annexes 'B' and 'C' from my file for the sub-county at my office.

46. On 11 October 2003, we recorded those huts that were burnt. I counted huts burnt within each block of the Pajule sub-county part of the camp at the same time as the block leaders and others. We counted 23 huts burnt on the Pajule sub-county side of the camp. This is the information I listed in annexes 'B' and 'C'.
47. I attach as annex 'D' a list of all those whose homes were burnt that were recorded within both Pajule and Lapul sub-county within the camp and who received help from the Church of Uganda. The Catechist from the Church of Uganda brought me information about ten huts that were burnt in the Lapul sub-county side of the camp. However, I do not know if this was the total number of huts burnt on the Lapul side of the camp. I cannot recall the name of the Catechist. I compiled this list attached as annex 'D' and obtained it from my office where I had been storing it.
48. It was the block leaders and not me who compiled the information of those camp residents from Pajule sub-county reported as abducted and households reported as looted, which I summarised for annexes 'B' and 'C'.
49. I attach as annex "E", "F", "G," and "H" the original records of those reported to the block leaders as abducted by LRA, by their relatives. These annexes were compiled by each block leader of the six parishes of Pajule sub-county from 10 October until about 19 October 2003. We had called for the camp residents of Pajule sub-county to go to the block leaders of their parish if they had lost a relative. These block leaders or those they delegated recorded the abductee's names, village, parish, sex, and age. The block leaders' lists came separately to me, but they had all provided these records to me by 20 October 2003, when I finished compiling my lists attached as annexes 'B' and 'C'. These lists only cover those reported as abducted from Pajule sub-county and not from Lapul sub-county within the camp. I obtained these records from my office, where I have been storing them. On 20 October 2003 I used the numbers of abductees recorded in annexes "E", "F," "G", and "H", for the numbers recorded as abducted in annex "B" and "C".
50. It is not possible to know exactly how many people were abducted on 10 October 2003. I cannot confirm this number, for instance as it was assumed that some people thought to be missing had run away to relatives outside the camp. This prevented the lists being compiled on the same day as the attack. The lists were being compiled slowly as information kept trickling in. I do not know how many abductees have returned, as those returning were not all reporting to my office, but were reporting to the office of the LC-3 and other places such as the nearby camps where they had relatives, nearby barracks to where they were and from where they were taken straight to a reception centre.



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51. My office does not know how many people are still missing. Some of those returning from abduction were taken to the LC-3 office, and were then taken to the barracks to give information. However, I cannot be certain that all of those abductees returning went to the LC-3's office. I was present at some of those times those abducted on 10 October 2003 returned and reported to the LC-3's office. Their particulars were taken such as their name, their age, their village and parish, their parents, the date of their abduction, and leader of their group whilst they were in the bush under the LRA's captivity.
52. The camp commandant and block leaders of Lapul sub-county were also required under our regulations to record information for those abducted, huts burnt, people who died, and households looted. They should have the records of those reported by relatives as abducted from the four parishes of Lapul sub-county. The name of the current camp commandant of Lapul sub-county is Otika Terence Kanyum. I do not know of the numbers abducted from Lapul sub-county.
53. I attach as annex "T" the list of abductees who had been at reception centres and were reported as having returned to Pajule IDP camp. I started supervising the compilation of this list from 2003 and we continued recording this information until 2004. The staff at my office and I compiled this list at the request of NGOs to confirm those abductees from Pajule IDP camp, who had been at the NGOs' reception centres. We only recorded information of those abductees, who reported at our office themselves or relatives on their behalf, with a letter from the abductee's reception centre. The block leader of that abductee's parish would record their information, unless the block leader delegated the task to somebody else (for example the block leader of Palenga parish has difficulty writing) or if they were not present somebody else in our office, including me, recorded it.
54. Some of the people included in this list have since left Pajule IDP camp. This list does not include the names of anybody who was abducted but did not receive a letter from a reception centre including those said to be released by Oti Vincent, nor does it include any of those abducted who may have not returned to Pajule IDP camp after their return from captivity. I obtained this list from my office where I had stored it as a sub-county record.
55. The rebels got into most of the huts of the camp. We called for camp residents to provide information to the block leaders of any properties stolen or damaged. I attach as annexes "J", "K", "L", and "M" the records of the block leaders for four of the six parishes within Pajule sub-county of Pajule IDP camp, of those who reported properties looted and homes burnt in the attack of 10 October 2003. The lists recorded the numbers of food stuffs and non food stuffs taken from these camp residents, and whether their homes were burnt. Annex "J" lists this information for Ogago parish; annex "K" lists this information for Otok parish; annex "L" lists this information for Paiula parish; and annex "M" lists this information for Palwo parish. The block leaders provided me with their records after they finished compiling this information about items looted and properties damaged by early 2004. I obtained these records from my office, where they



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were stored. I have not been able to locate the records from the block leaders for the other two parishes.

56. Both shop owners and owners of huts wrote down what had been stolen from their properties. For example, I also had properties looted from one of my huts in the Pajule side of the camp, though not the hut that I was hiding in when the rebels attacked. This is recorded under my wife's name, Agness Okema, in annex "M". I consider that these claims of the property owners were genuine as our people fear that if you write anything down that is not true you will be traced and could be punished.
57. I attach as annexes "N" and "O", the lists of those selected from Ogago and Palwo parishes amongst households looted in the LRA attack of 10 October 2003, who received basins from NGOs. It was not possible for all those who had their properties looted to receive such help. These lists were prepared by the block leaders of the Pajule sub-county parishes, who brought the lists to me. I obtained these lists from my office where I stored them. There should be further records of those who received assistance from the other four parishes.
58. I attach as annex "P" the list I compiled by the beginning of 2004 of numbers of those households, which had properties looted on 10 October 2003 from the six parishes of Pajule sub-county of Pajule IDP camp. I obtained this list from my office where it was kept.
59. I attach as annex "Q" a list of properties looted during the attack on 10 October 2003, that I received from the LC-3 chairperson of Pajule sub-county Mr. Alphonse Lokilamoi. I am not certain of who provided the list to the chairman. I think this list was mistakenly given to me by the chairman on 6 February 2005.
60. I attach as annex "R" three lists dated 30 November 2003 setting out the separate and combined figures for numbers of people living within Pajule sub-county and Lapul sub-county of Pajule-Lapul IDP camp. I compiled these lists by summarising the information provided to me by block leaders of Pajule sub-county and from the camp commandant of Lapul sub-county of the camp. I obtained these lists from my file in my office.
61. I attach as annex "S" lists of households in the six parishes of Pajule sub-county in November 2003, according to categories of heads of households: those headed by the elderly, headed by children (those without parents), headed by civil servants and "normal households." The first page containing the summary was compiled by the general secretary of Pajule IDP camp named Kitara Francis. He used for his summary the records for each parish also attached that were compiled by the block leaders who received their information from village leaders. The block leaders provided to me the lists for their parishes and Kitara Francis gave me his summary in November 2003. I took these lists from my office where they were stored.



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62. I attach as annex "T" a list of names of children reported as abducted by the child abductees if they returned or their relatives. This list covers the period from 2002 to 2003, including 23 January 2003. However, this is not a complete list as not all child abductees or their relatives reported their abductions. This list was being compiled in my office by the different block leaders from the six parishes of Pajule sub-county, but I kept the list in a box under my control in my office. I took this list from my office where I had stored it.

Records from previous attacks

63. I attach as annex "U" my file copy of the list I compiled of those people killed by the LRA or by the UPDF, houses burnt and granaries burnt, from June 2002 until 14 November 2002. This list covers the six parishes of Pajule sub-county of the camp. These records were not in relation to only one attack but a number of incidents. The homes and granaries were burnt by the LRA. I understand that the individual killed in Ogago parish is thought to have been killed by UPDF soldiers in his home in front of his relatives for being a suspected rebel collaborator. However, I am not certain about this information.

64. The two civilians killed in Palenga parish were thought to have been killed when drunk UPDF soldiers had started shooting and other UPDF soldiers thinking the soldiers were rebels threw bombs in their direction killing two civilians with the bomb shelling. After the killings of these three civilians by UPDF soldiers, I was told by my vice camp commandant that there was a security committee meeting which included the UPDF IO (Intelligence Officer), commanding officer (CO) of the military barracks, GISO and LC-3. My vice camp commandant was present. He told me that at that meeting the UPDF said they were investigating what had happened but I never saw the results of those investigations. We have been told by the UPDF that if any army personnel commits a crime they will face the law, but I am not aware if any of the soldiers involved in these three killings of civilians received any punishment.

65. I obtained annex "U" from my office where it was stored.

Closing Procedure

66. I have nothing to add to the above statement nor do I have anything to clarify.

67. I have given the answers to the questions of my own free will.

68. There has been no threat, promise or inducement which has influenced my answers.

69. I have no complaints about the way I was treated during this interview.

70. I was informed that I might be called to testify before the Court and that, if called as a witness, my identity may have to be disclosed to the Court, the accused, and to defence counsel of the accused. I am currently willing to appear as a witness in Court, if called to testify.


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71. I was informed of the procedures available to the Court of ensuring the protection of confidential information provided to the Court, as well as for my own protection and security.

72. It has been explained to me that if a case commences, and a nation asks the Court for a copy of my witness statement, the Court may decide to transmit my statement to the requesting nation. I was informed that protective measures may be available in such an event. I do not agree that my statement may be transmitted to law enforcement authorities of nations who might request it, including the Government of Uganda.

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This Statement has been read over to me in the Acholi and English languages and is true to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this Statement voluntarily and I am aware that it may be used in legal proceedings before the International Criminal Court and that I may be called to give evidence in public before the International Criminal Court.

Signed: 

Dated: 21/02/2005


INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

I,  certify that:

1. I am duly qualified to interpret from the Acholi language into the English language and from the English language into the Acholi language.
2. I have been informed by Okema John Brown that he speaks and understands the Acholi and English languages.
3. I have orally translated the above statement from the English language to the Acholi language in the presence of Okema John Brown who appeared to have heard and understood my translation of the Statement.
4. Okema John Brown has acknowledged that the facts and matters set out in his Statement, as translated by me, are true to the best of his knowledge and recollection and has accordingly signed his signature where indicated.



Dated: 21 | 02 | 05

Signed: 



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