

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR

WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION:

Last Name: ADONG

Gender: Female

First Name: Hellen

Father's Name: ODONG Marensio

Other names used: Min AKANYO
Min OCEN

Mother's Name: AKELLO Arujina

Place of Birth: Lalogi Minjaa

Passport / ID number: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth/Age: 20/06/1966 (49)

Nationality(s): Ugandan

Ethnicity: Acholi

Religion: Catholic

Language(s) Spoken: Acholi

Language(s) Written: None

Language(s) Used in Interview: Acholi and English

Occupation: Farmer and sells foodstuff at the market

Place of Interview: Gulu, Uganda

Date(s) and Time(s) of Interview: 26/10/2015 11:07-11:10, 11:30 – 11:45, 12:20 – 13:25,
14:50 – 16:05 & 16:20 – 16:23; 27/10/2015 09:03 – 09:55, 10:35 – 11:07; 28/10/2015 09:23 –
10:40, 12:00 – 13:01, 14:05 -1530

Names of all persons present during interview: Hellen ADONG (Witness), [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (Investigator), [REDACTED] (Assistant Investigator), [REDACTED]

(Psycho-Social Expert), [REDACTED] (Interpreter)

Signature(s):

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]

Witness statement of Hellen ADONG

UGA-OTP-0248-0013



UGA-OTP-0283-1285

WITNESS STATEMENT

Procedure

1. I was introduced to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and told that they are investigators with the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) of the International Criminal Court (ICC). I was introduced to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and told that they are a psycho-social expert and interpreter with the OTP of the ICC.
2. The investigators explained to me what the ICC is and described its mandate. They explained the role and mandate of the OTP within the ICC.
3. The investigators explained to me that they are investigating events that took place in Northern Uganda in the period 2002-2004. I was informed that the OTP is contacting me because they believe I may have information relevant for establishing the truth.
4. I was told that I have the right to be questioned in a language that I fully understand and speak. I confirm that Acholi is a language that I fully understand and speak. I confirm that the language used by the interpreter in this interview is Acholi.
5. The investigators explained to me that this interview is voluntary and that I may end it at any time.
6. I was informed that any information I give to the OTP, including my identity, might become subject to disclosure to the parties of the proceedings at the ICC; in particular the judges, Accused persons, the Counsel of the Accused and the legal representatives of the victims.
7. I was informed that I might be called to testify before the Court. It was brought to my attention that ICC trials are held in public and explained to me that, as an exception to the principle of public hearings, the judges may apply protective measures to those testifying if circumstances require.
8. I am currently willing to appear as a witness in Court, if called to testify. I understand that disclosure of my identity and information I have provided may take place whether or not I am called to testify.
9. The possible security implications resulting from my interaction with the OTP were discussed with me. The investigators have explained to me the reasons and



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importance of keeping my contacts with the OTP confidential, which I fully understand.

10. Having understood all the above issues, I confirmed my willingness to answer the investigators' questions.
11. The investigators explained to me how the interview was going to be conducted. I was told by the investigators that it is important that I am as accurate as possible in my account; and that I state when I do not know or do not understand the question. I understand that I need to distinguish between what I have experienced or seen myself and what I have heard or learned about from someone else.
12. 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, make any corrections, or add additional information.

Background

13. I was born in Lalogi, Minjaa in June 1966. I never attended school and I cannot read or write. I got married to Mario OTTOBER in 1985. We used to live in Te Olam, in Olam village, Odek sub-county, Gulu district. However life was very hard because we spent our nights in the bush and returned home during the day. This was because we were frightened that KONY's rebels would kill or abduct either us or our children.

Odek Camp

14. In June 2003 we moved to the Odek camp. I do not know who specifically told us to move to the camp but I heard the government told us to do that so that they could provide us with protection. Some people moved of their own free will because they thought it would be safer to live near a trading centre because there would be more people.
15. We were provided with food once a month because we did not farm at this time. When the food arrived people would say "World Food" has arrived so we went and collected it. They provided maize, cooking oil and beans.
16. The UPDF provided security at the camp. I saw them myself, I do not know how many but they lived in their barracks. They sometimes bought vegetables from us. They had a leader but I do not know his name. Some were wearing the camouflage uniform and others wore a plain uniform. The camouflage uniform had several colours like grass colour. The others had a uniform the colour of cow dung (dark green).



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17. I was asked where my house was located within the camp. My house was at the edge of the camp beside a bamboo tree. There was another house with an iron roof nearby beside a mango tree. We had two houses in the camp and I used one for cooking. The houses were located near the school's food store. The road to Pader, that crossed the Odek river, was beside the camp.
18. In the camp there was a health centre and the sub-county headquarters. The health centre was in the middle of the camp while the sub-county headquarters was at the side. The sub-county headquarter is still in the same location today, however, the office was smaller then. Odek Primary School was located across river Odek. As far as I know, all of the camp residents' houses were made of brick with a grass thatched roofs.
19. The camp leader was my husband, Mario OTTOBER. The previous camp leader was called NYEKO Ajula. When we first arrived at the camp NYEKO was the camp leader and my husband replaced him not long before the attack on Odek camp. ALING Mary was the deputy camp leader and Edisa BANYA was the women leader. There was a camp secretary called OKUMU Alit.
20. I was asked if I remember any other leaders at the camp. I remember three people who served on the camp food committee which was in charge of food distribution: Veronica ONEN (not the same woman who later died), a man called OJUKU, I do not know his other names but his father was called ALUNY and a woman called AKELLO Susan Obita. I do not know how many people lived in the camp.
21. I had six children who attended school: My first born, OCAYA Dennis who was about 20, did not live in the camp because he was going to school in Gulu. The second born was OROMA Mary aged 17. The next was OBWOYA Sunday aged 14, then KIDEGA David aged 12, NYEKO Tony aged 10, and OPOKA Robert aged 8. I had twins, a boy OCEN Jacob and a girl called APIO Sharon. They were three to four months old at the time of the attack.

Attack on Odek Camp

22. The rebels attacked Odek camp on Thursday 29 April 2004. I know the day and date, because the school holidays were due to start the next day, Friday, 30 April. Earlier that day at around 2 pm we attended a meeting which had been called by the UPDF. The meeting took place under the Mango tree where there was a market. I attended the meeting and stayed for a short while. I recall what was said when I was at the meeting. The UPDF commander said that if civilians wanted to visit their gardens they should not go very early because the rebels were around the area. I cannot remember the name of the commander, but he spoke Acholi. I then left the meeting to go home and prepare food for my children.



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23. The attack began around 5 pm. I know the time because my five children had just returned from school and I was warming food for them. I was outside seated in the shade of the bamboo tree. Some of my children had already changed out of their uniforms and were outside with me, the others were inside changing their uniforms. We heard gunshots and people started running. We ran into our house. Apart from my five children who attended school, I had the twins as well in the house. We could hear the gunshots from inside the house. At one point a bullet entered the house but missed us because we were all lying down.
24. OBWOYA said "Mama we should go out because ATENYO has been shot and has fallen down". He could see ATENYO because the door of the house was open. ATENYO was a mother of one child and a resident of the camp. She was walking behind the bamboo tree when she was shot. I told OBWOYA to stay indoors and lie down and pray.
25. My husband was in a neighbouring house. I indicated the distance between the house I was in and where he was, which was approximated as around five metres away. He put his head up and shouted at me to stay in the house. He said that if I was to be shot let it be from inside the house. Another man called OKOT Akweilla entered the house and said that things were very bad outside. He then ran out of the house and ran away. I closed the door.

Abduction

26. A rebel soldier kicked the door in. He was wearing a black long-sleeved shirt, grass coloured trousers and gumboots. He was wearing a greenish cap which covered his face and was carrying a gun. He was the same height as my son KIDEGA who was tall for his age but judging by his face he was older than KIDEGA. I would estimate his age as around 17-18 years old. I have been asked to describe the gun he was carrying, but I was too scared to look at it.
27. I picked up OCEN and ran outside. I said to him: "don't shoot me I am a civilian". He told me in Acholi to get moving. I was wearing a blouse and a shirt but no shoes. I was looking around for an item of clothing to carry the baby with, but the soldier hit me with the butt of his gun in the lower thigh on my right leg. My leg was in a lot of pain where he had hit me. I still feel pain in the leg to this day when I do a lot of work. We started walking through the camp. My home was on the edge of the camp and we walked to the direction of the barracks. I was not tied and I did not see anybody who was tied.
28. The rebel who abducted me met his colleagues near the barracks. They were looting maize, beans and flour from the houses there. They were rebels like the one who



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came to my house. Most of them had guns. I heard a whistle being blown and all the rebels formed up into a line. I do not know who blew the whistle. After the whistle the rebels told us to carry the looted items.

29. I do not know how many rebels were within the camp but there were many. You could not see their faces because most were wearing caps which covered their ears and foreheads. Some of the rebels had civilian clothes but most of them had military uniform and they had guns. Some had red pips on their shoulders. The pip was a red piece of cloth which had been sewn on the top of their arm sleeves. All the rebels I saw were men and I did not see any females among the rebels.
30. The rebel who abducted me found a 50 kg sack of maize in OCII's house which was in the middle of the camp and he started to beat me telling me to leave my baby and carry the sack. I thought I am not going to leave my baby. He continued to beat me. I carried the sack on my head and my baby on my back. The baby was naked and I was bare-chested because I used my blouse to carry my baby on my back.
31. One of the rebels who looked elderly with grey hair came and told the rebel who abducted me to stop torturing me and let me carry the sack of maize. I carried the maize. He called the man who abducted me OLOBO. That was the only name I heard because they just called each other LAPWONY which means teacher. I do not know why they used this term.

Dead Bodies

32. We walked from the barracks past some houses to the road. I saw five dead bodies while I was walking; I saw the bodies of an old man called OKEC Kijikiya and his wife Veronica inside their house near the door. I do not know how they died but they looked dead and there was blood beside them.
33. I also saw OPIO's body which was by his house. I do not know his other names but his mother was called ANYAYO. He had fallen on his stomach, his head was turned on its side and his leg was by the door of his house. His body and head were covered in blood. His house was located near the road; the rebels entered the house to take things out.
34. When I crossed the road going to Pader I saw the body of a man called ONGWEN just outside his house, near him I saw the body of a woman with a baby on her back, the baby was still alive. I do not know the name of the woman.



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Leaving the Camp

35. There were many of us walking in a line leaving the camp. I remember that ADONG Karla; Paska wife of OJIGI; and Santa wife of ALEO, were abducted with me. Santa also had new born twin girls, whom she left at home, and both of them later died because when she came back they were weak and could not breastfeed. Our homes were close together and I saw her after we returned from the bush and she told me that the twins were refusing to breastfeed. One died three days after we returned from the bush and the other died three days later.
36. I saw more than twenty people who were abducted by the rebels. Most of them were women; some of them were carrying their babies. I saw two children among the abductees, ADOCH Agnes who was about 14-16 and OJARA who was about 14-15.
37. It was around one hour from when the shooting began until we left the camp. It was starting to get dark, it was also about to rain and it was very windy.
38. When we crossed the road we found a baby boy, about two years old, who had been left on the path. The child's mother was called Alice and she was the wife of KIDGEGA also called ABINY. I saw Alice among the abducted people later. The rebels told me to throw away my baby but I refused.
39. I was asked whether the rebels told us the reason for attacking the camp, they did not tell us.
40. We moved in a line. Every second person was a rebel and then an abductee. I could see that some of the rebels were of different heights. I have shown with my hand the approximate height of the smaller ones which I have been told it is around 1.5 metres tall. I have shown with my hand the height of the taller rebels and I have been told that it is around 1.8 metres.
41. The rebels beat people who were moving slowly even if what they were carrying was very heavy. We tried to avoid looking at them therefore I cannot tell if any of them were children. One woman was looking at one of the rebels. The rebel said: "who is your mother's husband that you are looking at me like that? I will poke you in the eye if you keep looking at me".

In the Bush

42. We came to a stream called Oceyo and beside it was an abandoned homestead with granaries made of reeds. It was dark and I think the troops were feeling hungry so



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we sat there. The rebels started to destroy the granaries in order to get the reeds. They removed the hardened mud off the reeds and then used the reeds to make fire.

43. I was in a group of three soldiers and three captives: one man and two women including me. I cannot remember the name of the woman but she was the wife of OKELLO Olet. As we were sitting there, one man came wearing a rain coat with a hood which covered his face. He was walking with some other soldiers. When he stopped they would stop and when he started walking again they followed him. The soldiers who were sitting down stood up and saluted him.
44. The man came to us; it was very dark so I could not even see the colour of the coat. He said to us: "Mothers, you left your home and entered the camp thinking the government would protect you and we would not find you but we did find you. Do you think you are not going to die today?" He continued to move among the different groups. I did not see where he slept. Then one of them said to others, the leader told us to put out the fires and everyone should sleep.
45. One of the soldiers was lying down and I was sitting near him with his gun in between us. He told me that if I did not want to sleep I would die.
46. During that time my child was crying because it was cold and he was naked. The rebels told me to make the baby stop crying because the government troops could hear. I was thinking where I could put the baby to calm him. Then the rebels beat my back with the butt of their guns but they did not beat my baby. At this time I was carrying my baby on my chest. They also beat other women whose babies were crying. I cannot remember who these women were except one who was the wife of OKELLO Olet. I placed my baby on the wet grass while we slept. The cold was bothering him and he was crying but when I breast fed him he became quiet.
47. We slept at this location until around dawn then everyone got up. I could now see the rebel who slept beside me. He was wearing a military uniform, a dark green rain coat covering his whole body and black military shoes with laces that went up to the ankle. The rebels told us that everyone should carry what they had carried from the camp and anyone who did not do this would be killed.
48. I was asked whether any of the women suffered sexual assault while in the bush. I did not see or hear anything about any such incidents.

Injured Commander

49. One of the rebel commanders, who they called LAPWONY, had been injured. He was being carried on a bed by nine men who were also abducted from Odek. Four men would carry him and then another four took a turn. I knew four of the men



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carrying the injured man by name: LATIGO (who was my brother-in-law), OJOK, OPAB and OTOO. I recognised the others but I did not know their names. They were carrying LAPWONY in the line in front of me. He was covered so I could not see how he was injured and I do not know when he was injured.

50. We walked for about four miles and then we stopped again. The rebels said that LAPWONY told them to put him down and massage his body. When they had massaged him we started moving again.
51. We walked for about a further two miles. We reached a stream beside a forest which they said was near the river. I could tell by the position of the sun that it was around 2 pm. Then they said that the women who carried things from Odek should bring them to one place and then everyone should sit down.

Release

52. The rebels brought us to a place under a big tree and told us to sit there. The injured man, LAPWONY, was put down lying on the ground near to us. The rebels said that since we were women and had refused to throw away our babies they were going to release us. They also told us that on our way back we would find many people who had died. They died because they did not listen, they were told to carry things but they had thrown away those things and tried to hide. I heard this myself from the rebels who abducted us.
53. They told us to go home but, if LAPWONY dies they were going catch us and kill us all because he was worth ten of us. They also said not to walk straight, but to follow the river because the government soldiers were following. We were frightened because LAPWONY did not look well and we thought if he died they would kill us.

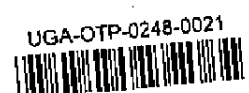
Return to the Camp

54. We left at around 3 pm and ran most of the way home. We arrived home at around 6 pm and we found people collecting the dead bodies. My husband wrote down some of the names of the people who had died and later transferred this to his diary. He did this because he was the camp leader. Some of the people who had died were my relatives: Mary AGUDU who was my husband's step-mother and Doreen OJOK who was daughter-in-law to my sister, AWOR Joska.
55. On our way back Alice told me that she left behind her child because the rebels told her to. When she returned she found her child had returned home. The people in the camp heard the child crying and they brought him back to his father.



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56. What brought me the most pain from this incident is the fact that I had left APIO Sharon at home. When I got home I found that she had been crying and was weak. She did not want to breast feed and she died a week later. I had brought her to the doctor, he checked if she was suffering from malaria but she was not. The doctor was not able to diagnose any other illness.
57. When I returned my house was the same except for the bullet hole in the wall. I used some mud to seal the hole. The other houses were also the same state I left them, except for bullet holes. After I returned, I could not walk well for a couple of weeks because my feet had blisters and thorns in them from walking barefoot in the bush.

Deaths of the Abducted Men

58. I later spoke with OJARA when he had returned from the bush. I asked him about LATIGO and OJOK. He told me that the rebel commander LAPWONY had died and LATIGO and OJOK along with the other men who were abducted were killed in revenge. He said that we had been very lucky because the commander had died very soon after we left and the rebels wanted to kill us as well. It was only by God's grace that we survived. OJARA later died of illness.

Child Abductions

59. I was asked whether I know any children who were abducted from Odek. Apart from OJARA I know a boy called ONEK and a girl called ADOCH Agnes who were abducted from Odek and later returned from the bush. ONEK is still in Odek but ADOCH is at her home but I do not know where that is. I am not sure how long ONEK spent in the bush but I think it was less than a year. ADOCH stayed some months in the bush and when she returned she stayed with GUSCO for a while.

Injured people

60. My husband told me that many people were injured during the attack and they were brought to the hospital. I knew three of them: one was called Santa AKELLO; she had been hit by a bullet in her abdomen. The bullet had remained inside her stomach but it was removed in the hospital and she recovered. There was another woman but I do not know her name. She had been hit in the ear and jaw. I saw her when I was abducted and I thought she had died. However when I returned she was in the hospital and she later recovered. Finally there was ATENYO who I mentioned earlier. She had been shot in the shoulder and needed to have the bullet removed. They all went to one of the two main hospitals in Gulu but I am not sure which one.



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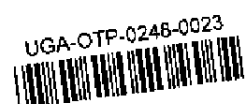
Closing Procedure

61. I was informed that individuals who according to the judges qualify as victims will be entitled to participate in future court proceedings and potentially to receive reparations. I was informed of the existence of the Victims' Participation and Reparation Section and its function, as well as on the procedure for applications. I consent to my personal data being shared with the Victims' Participation and Reparation Unit.
62. I was informed that I may be called to testify before the Court. It was brought to my attention that ICC trials are held in public and explained to me that, as an exception to the principle of public hearings, the judges may apply protective measures to those testifying if circumstances require.
63. The investigators informed me of the protective measures that may apply during and after the investigation and/or trial proceeding.
64. I have nothing to add to the above statement nor do I have anything to clarify. I am available to be contacted in the future for clarifications or questions on topics not covered during this interview.
65. I have given the answers to the questions of my own free will.
66. There has not been any form of coercion, duress, threat, promise or inducement which has influenced my account.
67. I have no complaints about the way I was treated during this interview.



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WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This statement has been read over to me in the English and Acholi and (it) 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: 28/10/15 *WJF*

INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

1. I  certify that:
2. I am duly qualified to interpret from the Acholi language into the English language and from the English language into the Acholi language.
3. I have been informed by Hellen ADONG that she speaks and understands the Acholi language.
4. I have orally translated the above statement from the English language to the Acholi language in the presence of Hellen ADONG who appeared to have heard and understood my translation of this statement.
5. Helen ADONG has acknowledged that the facts and matters set out in her statement, as translated by me, are true to the best of her knowledge and recollection and has accordingly signed her signature where indicated.

Signed: _____ 

Dated: 28/10/15

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