

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR

WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION:

Last Name: OPIO

Gender: Male

First Name: Jacob

Father's Name: Martin AWANY

Other names used:

Mother's Name: Catherine ANGOM

Place of Birth: Abok

Passport / ID number: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth/Age: 04 May 1974

Nationality(s): Ugandan

Ethnicity: Lango

Religion: Pentecostal Assembly of God

Language(s) Spoken: Lango and limited English

Language(s) Written: Lango

Language(s) Used in Interview: Lango / English

Occupation: Farmer

Place of Interview: Lira

Date(s) and Time(s) of Interview: 18/04/16 13:45 - 16:40; 19/04/2016 11:30 - 13:30

Names of all persons present during interview: [REDACTED] (Investigator); [REDACTED] (Assistant Investigator); [REDACTED] (PSE); [REDACTED] (Interpreter) and Jacob OPIO (Witness)

Signature(s): OPIO JAWB 19/4/2016 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 19/4/2016 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 19/4/2016 [REDACTED]

Witness statement of Jacob OPIO
[REDACTED] 19/4/2016 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 19/4/2016 [REDACTED]

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 psychosocial expert and an interpreter respectively 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 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 agreed that the interview would be conducted in the Lango language. I fully understand and speak Lango.
5. The investigators explained to me that I do not have to answer to their questions. The investigators explained to me that they are seeking to find out the truth. I agree to tell the truth and that my answers to their questions are as complete as possible and reflect the best of my knowledge and recollection.
6. I was informed that any information I give to the OTP, including my identity, may be shared with 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. The investigators have explained to me the reasons and importance of keeping my contacts with the OTP confidential, which I fully understand.
8. Having understood all the above issues, I confirmed my willingness to answer the investigators' questions.
9. The investigators explained to me how the interview was going to be conducted. I was told that I needed to be as accurate as possible in my account and that I should state when I do not know the answer to 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.

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10. 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

11. I was born on 04 May 1974 in Akwal village, Bar Parish, Abok Sub-county, Oyam District. I studied at Abok Primary School until P.7 then I went to Acul Banya Secondary School and sat my senior four at Aboke High. I went back home after this and became a farmer. I did not do any other job and I have lived only in Abok during this period.

Move to Abok Camp

12. In 2003, I moved to Abok camp because of the intensified rebel activities in the villages. By rebels I mean those of Joseph KONY. The government asked the villagers to move to the camp because the rebels were continuously coming to the villages and the rebels would find us even when we tried to hide in the bush. The rebels would kill people if they caught or found them. I believe the government wanted us to live together in the camp so we could receive protection from the soldiers against the rebels.
13. I do not remember the exact date when we moved to the camp but it was in mid-2003. I moved to the camp with my family, that is my wife, two children and my sister in law and her three children.
14. Life in the camp was not so easy as compared to being in one's own home. There were so many people in the camp and there were no proper latrines, bathrooms and as a result there were diseases. When the rebels intensified their activities and would abduct or kill people who went back to the village to get food, World Food Program (WFP) started supplying food to the camp. As an example there was one person called OLWA who went to his village in Ariba to collect food, he was caught by rebels and killed by hitting the back of his head. I heard from the other villagers who had managed to escape that OLWA had been killed so I went and saw his body. I went with a group of other villagers to Ariba to see his body.
15. While at the camp, I lived next to the road close to the centre. I had built a house with iron sheet roofing. I lived in this house with my wife, children and my sister in law and her children.

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Attack on Abok camp

16. On 08 June 2004 at about 4- 6pm we heard that the rebels were coming. I remember the time because I had a watch. There were people from the camp who had seen the rebels approaching so they came back and told us that the rebels were coming. I had just returned from the village with my wife and then gone to the centre. I had left the camp with my wife at about 9am after the government soldiers had moved around to check if there were any rebels around. It was a rule in the camp set by the government soldiers that no one was to leave the camp before 9am and to return between 5 and 6pm.
17. It was a man called OLWA Charles who told us that the rebels were coming. I was in the centre with several other people including my uncle OKAL Albino. When OLWA told us the rebels were coming, we generally discussed our options for instance run to the village or stay and we decided to remain in the camp. OLWA Charles had been to his village of Dwaliro and that is where he had seen the rebels and ran back to the camp to tell the others that the rebels were coming. OKELLO Newton was also with OLWA when he saw the rebels.
18. OLWA Charles also told the UPDF that the rebels were approaching. The UPDF soldiers came at about 7pm to tell us that their commander had sent them to tell us that the rebels had passed around the camp and that we should remain in our houses even if we heard gun shots. We listened to the warning and went into our houses at about 7:30pm.

Attack begins

19. At about 8:15pm I heard a few gunshots from the direction of the road from Akwal just behind the camp. I know that it was 08:15 because after the incident we talked amongst each other to check when the attack had started and we confirmed that it was at about 8:15pm.
20. The gunshots were first few then it intensified. I remained in the house and we wondered what we could do so we decided to stay in the house. I could hear a lot of shouting and clanging sounds. The rebels were shouting, "*maka maka ka inongo gi,*" meaning, "just catch them if you get them". It was the rebel women shouting this in Acholi. I could understand because Acholi and Lango are very similar and if you speak one, you can understand the other. I also lived close to the Lango/Acholi border. I can differentiate between Acholi and Lango. This is how we knew that it was the rebels because they generally shouted and made clanging sounds when they were attacking a place. We had also already been warned that the rebels were coming. I could not see what was going on outside from my house but could hear the shouting, clanging sounds and gunshots. I could also hear the crackling sound from houses being burnt.

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21. The rebels were able to overpower the soldiers. Once the soldiers had been overpowered, they started running to the camp, telling people to flee but people in the middle of the camp did not get this warning so they remained in their houses. I heard that the soldiers had been overpowered by the rebels as the civilians from the edge of the camp ran past our houses shouting that we should flee because the soldiers had told them to. I cannot tell how many government soldiers were at the camp because they would change them regularly and the soldiers would not allow civilians how many they were. I could not also tell the number of the rebels because they attacked at night but I know that they were many.
22. I tried to run out with my wife and sister in law but the gunfire was too so much. When I opened the door, I saw gunfire and people running. It was quite dark but I recognised someone called ANGIM who ran past my door. I was so scared at this point and went back into my house and locked the door. I was in the house with my wife and sister in law who had a child on her back. My other children were at school.
23. The rebels came to the door and started piercing it with a bayonet. They kept saying, "*jal yab dogola, jal yab dogola*," meaning, "you open the door, open the door." I refused to open the door and kept holding onto it until they unhinged it using the bayonet. I threw the door down on the outside and ran out past them but I didn't go far, just about 18 meters and was shot in the leg. I pulled myself into an unfinished house and realised that I was bleeding from a gunshot injury on my right kneecap. I took the cloth that I was wearing and tied the wound. The bullet went from the left to the right and came out. There were a few rebels both men and women at the door and they rushed into the house. I could not count their numbers as I was too scared. I could see them a bit as the camp was lit up from the burning houses. Some had torn clothes and others were in uniform. I could not tell the ages of the rebels outside my house. The rebels who were outside my house had guns and *pangas*. I could not tell the type of guns.
24. My uncle OKAL Albino and his wife AKULLU Justina were shot and killed in their house. OKAL's sister in law who was also in the house survived but I cannot remember her name now. My uncle's sister in law told us that when the rebels got into the house, they saw my uncle who was a bit fat and asked him for money. They assumed because he was fat that he was a rich man. He did not have any money so they shot him. I also heard from my wife that another *mzee* called ADONYO had also been shot and burnt in his house. I saw the bodies of my uncle and his wife the morning after the attack.
25. The rebels got into my house and looted the things in the house like a radio, clothes, beans, maize, pigeon peas, cooking utensils, suitcase, luggage bag and other smaller

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items. As the rebels were looting things from my house, my wife and sister in law managed to flee. The rebels continued to loot, kill and burn the houses in the camp.

26. I remained in this unfinished house and at some point raised myself up to peek out to see what was going on and saw that the rebels were still running through the camp so I lay back down. I saw them setting the houses on fire using lit grass from one house to the next. I believe they used matchsticks to light the grass.

Aftermath

27. I heard a government army vehicle called a *Mamba* arriving and which fired in the air and the rebels fled. I heard the sound of the *Mamba* because the house I was in was unfinished so I could hear everything. I could recognise the sound of the *Mamba* as there was no other vehicle that normally came to the camp at that time of the night.
28. I remained in the unfinished house till things got quiet and got out when I heard the UPDF calling people to come out. The UPDF spoke in Lango. I must have been in the house for about two hours. It was still a bit dark when I got out.
29. When I got out I saw people who had been burnt to death. I saw burning huts and people shot to death. Many people were killed but I couldn't count them all. I saw some lying nearby from where I had been hiding. Some were shot and others had burnt to death in their houses. I only recognised my uncle, his wife, *mzee* ADONYO, OKELLO DP and ANYIMA Hatari. I knew they were dead because it's easy to see a dead person. I also saw people returning from their hiding places.
30. All the injured were gathered together by the government soldiers in the middle of the camp and taken on the *Mamba* to Ngai health centre. Some of the injured had cuts on their heads; others had gunshot wounds in the stomach and arms. I did not count the number of injured as I was also in pain. It must have been about 7:30am as it was already bright. The distance from Abok to Ngai is quite short.
31. When we arrived at Ngai we received basic treatment because it did not have a lot of resources. We were about 8 injured people. People had been split into the ones with critical conditions and the ones who were not so badly off. The ones who were badly off were taken straight to Atapara Hospital. I was being lifted by the soldiers as I could not walk. I was in Ngai for one day and then moved to Lira. I came to Lira with public transport. My wife was with me so she helped me.
32. When I got to Lira I was taken to Ronam Clinic and a doctor examined my knee and found that the joints had been dislocated. He waited until about 8:30pm and then put back the joints. I remained in the hospital for about a week. I then returned to

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Ngai trading centre close to Ngai hospital where I had first been taken for about a week. I went back to the camp when I felt a bit better.

33. When I returned to the camp I found most people also returning and that the dead had been buried. Most of the houses had been burnt. The camp smelt bad because animals had been burnt in the houses or killed and several other things had also been burnt. WFP had brought some tarpaulins to make tents.
34. My father's brother OMARA Albino who had remained in the camp told me that the dead had been buried and the ones who had been abducted had not returned. He also told me that some of the abductees were OGWENG (Inu), AMENY (Inu), AKELLO Lucy and others I cannot now remember. OGWENG was about 12 years old; AKELLO was about 13 and AMENY about 15. I know their ages because they were my neighbours. They all had attended Abok Primary School. OGWENG and AMENY never returned but AKELLO returned in 2013. AKELLO told us that she was made to carry heavy load and made to be a wife.
35. I was also told by someone called AYUGI Molly that some people were abducted and made to carry the loot. She was given luggage to carry but she was a bit older so she released by the rebels and left to go. AYUGI is currently 49 years old. I know this because I asked her recently and she told me that she was 49.

ANNEXES

1. Annex A: A sketch of Abok Camp. I have made a drawing and on it is marked the following: my house, the place where I was hiding marked with an X, place marked W is where the injured were gathered after the attack, U is the house where my uncle and his wife were killed. I have also indicated the barracks and the main road running through the camp.


Closing Procedure

36. 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 of the procedure for applications. I consent to my personal data being shared with the Victims' Participation and Reparation Section.
37. 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.

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38. 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.
39. I have given the answers to the questions of my own free will.
40. There has not been any form of coercion, duress, threat, promise or inducement which has influenced my account.
41. 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 Lango language 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: OPIO JALUB

Dated: 19/4/2016

INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

1. I [REDACTED] certify that:
2. I am duly qualified to interpret from the Lango language into the English language and from the English language into the Lango language.
3. I have been informed by Jacob OPIO that he speaks and understands the Lango language.
4. I have orally translated the above statement from the English language to the Lango language in the presence of Jacob OPIO who appeared to have heard and understood my translation of this statement.
5. Jacob OPIO 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.

Signed: [REDACTED]

Dated: 19/04/2016

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