



THE ACHOLI RELIGIOUS LEADERS PEACE INITIATIVE

Plot 16 Olya Road
P.O. Box 104, Gulu, Uganda
Tel: 256-471-432484
Email: arlpj.interfaith@gmail.com

RECONCILIATION WORKSHOP **SUMMARY REPORT**

Masindi Hotel, Masindi
March 8th-12th 2009



Workshop Participants

Facilitated by Professor Hizkias Assefa

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United States Institute of Peace (USIP)

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For an unabridged copy of the workshop report, please contact ARLPI at aripi.interfaith@gmail.com or +256 (0) 471432484

1. INTRODUCTION:

From March 8th-12th, 2009, through funding by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) held a workshop to discuss and dialogue with various stakeholders in northern Uganda about the topic of reconciliation.

The workshop brought together Religious Leaders, District Peace Forums, Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) with peacebuilding and psychosocial support components, Cultural Leaders and representatives of the local and central government. The focus of the workshop was to define the specifics of a reconciliation vision for northern Uganda and how complementarity and synergy among stakeholders could be fostered.

Through the facilitation of Professor Hizkis Assefa, participants were taught about the process and dynamics of reconciliation and actively engaged to identify the key needs and challenges northern Uganda is facing regarding reconciliation. Through such input, a rough framework to begin the reconciliatory process was developed and a way forward discussed.

2. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a shared understanding of what reconciliation entails in northern Uganda.
- To map out strategies and plans for what needs to be done.
- To define roles, responsibilities, steps and ways forward.
- To create an ongoing structure that would guide the plans for programmes.
- To identify resource requirements for the implementation of the programme.

3. RECONCILIATION DEFINED:

Reconciliation is a conflict handling mechanism which entails the following elements:

1. *Honest Acknowledgement of the harm/injury each party has inflicted on the other.*
2. *Sincere regrets and remorse for injury done.*
3. *Readiness to apologize for one's roles in afflicting injury.*
4. *Readiness of the conflicting parties to let go of the anger and bitterness caused by the conflict and the injury.*
5. *Commitment by the offender not to repeat the injury.*
6. *Sincere efforts to redress past grievances that caused conflict and compensate damage caused to the extent possible.*

7. *Entering into a new mutually enriching relationship.*

4. THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION:

Entering into the process of reconciliation requires the following steps:

1. *Self examination/self reflection*
2. *Confession*
3. *Repentance*
4. *Asking for Forgiveness*
5. *Commitment to Change*
6. *Atonement*

5. THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF RECONCILIATION:

For sustainable peace to be realized, reconciliation must be done at the following levels:

1. ***Spiritual:*** *Reconciling with God.*
2. ***Self:*** *Reconciling with self.*
3. ***Neighbors:*** *Reconciling with others.*
4. ***Nature:*** *Reconciling with Nature.*

Participants explored at what levels reconciliation should be sought in northern Uganda. In summary, the following levels were identified¹:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Community</i> | 7. <i>Acholi Diaspora</i> | 13. <i>Clan</i> |
| 2. <i>Leadership</i> | 8. <i>Neighboring Regions</i> | 14. <i>Tribes</i> |
| 3. <i>LRA</i> | 9. <i>Individual</i> | 15. <i>IDP's</i> |
| 4. <i>CSO's</i> | 10. <i>Family</i> | 16. <i>Abductees/Returnees</i> |
| 5. <i>Vulnerable</i> | 11. <i>Elders</i> | 17. <i>Youth</i> |
| 6. <i>Security Organs</i> | 12. <i>UPDF</i> | 18. <i>Culture</i> |

6. ROOT CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT

Participants identified the political, economic, and socio-cultural root causes of the conflict². Key concerns to address for reconciliation were the identified as:

¹ For a full listing of the levels identified and possible areas of entry, please refer to Appendix A.

² For a complete breakdown of the root causes, please refer to Appendix B.

1. *Spirituality of the Acholi and the role it has played in the conflict.*
2. *Developed culture of laziness and dependence.*
3. *Disunity among Acholi society. What has been our role in this?*
4. *Divisive and manipulative leadership.*
5. *Cultural disintegration.*
6. *Immorality and greed among the people.*
7. *Corruption kept war going.*

It was also identified that there are two key issues which need to be addressed for sustainable reconciliation to be achieved: 1) Land reform, 2) Compensation/reparation.

7. RITUALS OF CONFESSION & REPENTANCE:

Northern Uganda is rich with rituals that can be used to help foster reconciliation. Five participants demonstrated rituals from the Muslim, Anglican, Orthodox and Acholi cultural perspectives.

Rituals are culturally bound and can be simple or complicated. The more deep rooted the conflict, the greater need for rituals to be used as a way of bringing closure to a matter. Reconciliation and rituals are compatible because a new social order is agreed upon.

8. RECONCILIATION FRAMEWORK FOR NORTHERN UGANDA:

Based on the discussions throughout the workshop, Dr. Hizkias Assefa summarized and created the following framework for reconciliation:

Phase I: (Immediate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Help ensure orderly, safe and sustainable return/resettlement. -Advocate for security guarantee and provision of basic needs of the most vulnerable. -Training of a reconciliation team -Mediation training. -Develop reparation, proposals and plans (memorials, schools, ICC trust fund, etc.) -Strengthen law enforcement. -Education for moral construction.
Phase II: (Short to Medium Term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Trauma healing of victims/offenders -Reconciliation between victim and offenders. -Mediation of land disputes between returnees and communities. -Family counseling (parent/child). -Intra/Inter family mediation and reconciliation. -Inter-clan mediation and reconciliation. -Inter-tribal reconciliation. -Forum for dialogue between leaders on reconciliation and leadership enhancement. -Reconciliation work within and between religious institutions. -Mass sensitizations and education on reconciliation. -Pursue peace negotiations/agreement and its logical conclusion.
Phase III: (Medium to Long Term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Advocacy for monitoring of DDR that won't spark community conflict. -Create/strengthen community form to address community problems and issues collaboratively. -Lobby for strengthening of law enforcement.

Long Term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lobby for through disarmament. -Create forum/courses/retreat for leadership enhancement. -Enhanced economic development plans for northern Uganda (mobilization of resources and proper implementation of PRDP). -Education for moral reconstruction. -Advocate for comprehensive and long term land policy. -Massive education and sensitization on environmental protection and development. -Forum for accountability for leaders to allow people recourse for misuse of power by leaders. -Regulation of activities of religious institutions. -Civil/military/security organ relations to be improved with community.
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9. WAY FORWARD:

Reconciliation Task Force:

The task force which will continue to work under the umbrella of ARLPI to further develop the reconciliation framework was identified by choosing two (2) people from each institution represented at the workshop. They are as follows:

- 1. MRS ROSALBA OYWA (COPA & PVP)**
- 2. MR AVOLA MARK (KKA)**
- 3. MR AVOLA MARK (KDLG & KKA)**
- 4. MRS. LUCY LARUBI (ARLPI)**
- 5. BISHOP M. BAKER OCHOLA (ARLPI)**
- 6. HON. MARGRET ODONG (LCV Amuru)**
- 7. HON. ONGOM SANTO SAN (LCV Pader)**
- 8. MR. OLWENY RAY (KKA Kitgum/Pader)**

The main responsibility of the task force is to help identify the following: *1) What can be done together as stakeholders and what needs to be done separately? 2) How we will link our activities together to have a greater impact.*

Additional Steps To Be Taken:

1. A mechanism under ARLPI needs to be developed which will bring other stakeholders on board and foster a spirit of voluntarism to work on reconciliation issues.
2. Activities designed to carry out the phases.
3. Tentative time frame must be developed.
4. A task force identified to help stakeholders carry out the plan.
5. Research on issues and best peace practices completed.
6. Disseminate the report over the radio (3-5 volunteers).
7. Revival and coordination of Acholi Peace Forum.
8. Acholi leadership must come together with one voice and stop being divisive.

APPENDIX A: LEVEL OF RECONCILIATION & PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Group:	Level of Reconciliation:	Proposed Actions:
Political Leaders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -LRA with Government. -LRA with the community. -Government with leaders. -Community with leaders (cultural, political & religious). -Leaders with leaders. -Leaders with LRA. -CSO's with government. -CSO's with LRA. -Clans with clans. -Acholi in Diaspora with government. -Acholi sub-region with neighbors. -Families with families. -Individuals with communities. -Self with self. -Acholi in Diaspora with community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Community advocacy for reintegration and reconciliation. -Capacity building. -Ritual festival. -Prayer conventions. -Pursuit of the conclusion of the Juba peace agreement. -Review and implement Kitgum and Paraa declarations. -Revival of Acholi peace forum. -Implementation of agreed upon agenda items of the Peace Talks. -Educational trust fund. -Creation of Women, youth and disabilities advocacy groups.
Cultural Leaders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Self with self -Conscience with self. -Intellect/perceptions with self. -Heart with self. -Spirit/soul with self. -Spouse with spouse. -Children with parents. -Dependants with caretakers. -Extended family with family. -Friend with friend. -Relatives with relatives. -Nature with self and communities. -Community with and the government. -Cultural and religious leaders between each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Address root causes of problems. -Reconstruction and rehabilitation of individuals and institutions in terms of their mandate and purpose. -Enhance the capacities of the parties (victims and communities) for peaceful coexistence. -Exploration of new opportunities for purpose of co-existence. -Positive leadership engagement with the people through dialogues. -Coordination between stakeholders. -Mobilization of people and resources.
Religious Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Child with parents. -Family with families. -Self with God. -Self with Self. -Self with neighbors. -Offenders with victims. -Urban with the displaced. -Land owners with IDP's. -LRA with the population. -LRA with UPDF. -UPDF with the population. -Leaders with the people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Self examination/awareness. -Trauma counseling/healing. -Music, dance and drama (MDD). -Hold retreats and meetings. -Develop interfaith reconciliation prayers/rituals. -Advocacy for reconciliation. -Mediation between the aggrieved. -Encourage tree planting, farming, etc to improve our environment. -Build a peace centre. -sensitize community to protect the environment. -Continue with the cross border meetings jointly with the other side.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Those whose loved ones returned with those who have lost their lives. -Those who lost loved ones with returnees. -Leaders with leaders. -Clans with clans. -Diaspora population with community. -Government with Diaspora. -Abductees with abductors. -Orphans with those who killed their parents. -Unaccompanied children with the community. -Widows with their in-laws. -Those who lost property with looters. -Raped with rapists. -Single headed families with relatives. -Elders with youth. -Vulnerable with community. -Defined with defilers. -Collaborators with the government. -Traitors with the betrayed. -Acholi with neighbors -North with the south. -Politicians with politicians. -Religious leaders with religious leaders. -Cultural leaders with cultural leaders. -Religious leaders with cultural leaders. -Adults with youth. -Students with teachers. -Cultural leaders and land owners. -Religious leaders and political leaders. -Husbands with wives. -Sudan, DRC with Uganda. -Ugandans with international community. 	<p>stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Advocate for regulation of time for drinking to curb alcoholism. -Sensitize people on the meaning and process of reconciliation.
<p>C.S.O's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Self with God. -Family with family. -Community members with community members. -Community with institutions. -Community and park authorities. -Leaders with leaders. -Diaspora with community. -Among ethnic groups. -Among religious groups. -Among traditional leaders. -Among religious leaders. -Police with community. -Local leaders and community. -Army and security forces with community. -LRA and government. -Among politicians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Self-reflection. -Trauma healing. -Prayers & study of religious text. -Family counseling. -Workshops on land laws. -Strengthen community structures. -Community dialogues and sensitizations. -Amendment of laws. -Capacity building of institutions. -Coordination of stakeholders. -Creation of by-laws. -Inclusion of minorities in decision making processes. -Regulation of religious institutions. -Inclusion of more religions in ARLPI. -Strengthening of law enforcement. -DDR. Training on human rights.

APPENDIX B: ROOT CAUSES & POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OF THE CONFLICT

	Root Causes	Way Forward
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Militarization of society. - Marginalization, exclusion, and manipulation of tribes. - Poor governance. - Greed of power. - Disorganization/division of the Acholi people. - Intimidation and unlawful arrest. - Poor leadership. - Colonial legacy of divide and rule. - Ethnicity/tribalism. - Abuse of human rights. - Failure to implement the Nairobi Peace Agreement of 1985. - Disrespect of the constitution. - Unequal opportunities in political appointment. - Failure of the state to protect people and their properties. - Desire for revenge. - Lack of political will. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - disarmament & demobilization of auxiliary groups. - Equal political opportunities. - Leadership development. - Education of rights and rule of law. - Practicing constitutionalism. - Attitudinal change. - Power sharing. - Develop curriculum of patriotism at all levels. - Practice of democracy and good governance. - Rule of law strengthened. - National reconciliation program designed. - Advocacy and dialogue at the regional and international level.
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corruption. - Unequal distribution of resources/economic imbalance. - Abject poverty in the North. - Historical division of labor by colonialists. - Unemployment. - Lack of market opportunities. - Poor infrastructure. - Loss of wealth such as land and livestock. - Economic plans of the colonialists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practicing good governance. - Mobilization of community for economic activities. - Education people on economic diversification. - Linking communities to better markets for trade. - Promote self-help groups such as cattle rearing. - Advocate for infrastructure development. - Comprehensive plan with proper implementation strategies to redress economic imbalance. - Compensation for lost property. - Inculcate the culture of hard work.
Socio-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural disintegration/loss of values - Weak cultural institutions. - Lack of integrity and money minded cultural and religious leaders. - Poor quality of education and health services. - Tribalism - Nepotism - Culture of Violence. - Stereotyping - Aligning religion with political parties and social services such as schools. - Spiritualism. i.e. Holy Spirit Movement, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moral rearmament such as teaching of Achebe's values, etc. - Advocacy for formulation of good by-laws to manage things such as child trafficking. - Build/strengthen capacity of cultural institutions. - Encourage quality leadership development. - Lobby for educational fund to support teaching and school facilities. - Employ qualified teachers. - Support infrastructural development of schools.

	-Failure to know history and culture.	and health facilities. -Revive national cultural day. -Appreciation and promotion of cultural di -Inculcate a spirit of nationalism to our you -Clear separation of politics and religion. -Develop a curriculum which honors history/struggle of Ugandan people.
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APPENDIX C: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	CONTACT
1	ARCHBISHOP J.B. ODAMA	CHAIRMAN	ARLPI	0772 602 943
2	MR. OTTO MATTHEW	LAND OFFICER & MINISTER	KDLG/KKA	0772 512 709
3	BISHOP NELSON ONONO	C/MAN FAC	ARLPI	0772 838 193
4	MRS. LUCY LARUBI	SECRETARY GENERAL	ARLPI	0772 903 882 lucylarubi@yahoo.co.uk
5	BISHOP BENJAMIN OJWANG	CORE TEAM MEMBER	ARLPI	0772 959 924
6	BISHOP M. BAKER OCHOLA	CORE TEAM MEMBER	ARLPI	0777 912 225 0772 306 669
7	MRS KARIMA LANYERO	C/PERSON PROGRAMME	ARLPI	K_obina@yahoo.co.uk
8	HON. OCHOLA BOSCO	VICE CHAIRMAN DLG/KJFP	KGLG	0772 988 039
9	RWOT AROP POPPY	RWOT/CHIEF	KKA KITGUM	0782 331 739
10	MR. PARTICK	DOCUMENTATION	AMNESTY	0782 925 516

	ASHBY	OFFICER	COMM.	
11	MR. L0KWIYA FRANCIS	PROGRAMME OFFICER	ARLPI	0772 348 912
12	RWOT COLLINS OPOKA	RWOT/CHIEF	KKA GULU	0782 489 435
13	MISS ANENA EVELYNE	SOCIAL WORKER	GUSCO	0772 387 240 evelynana@yahoo.co.uk
14	MR. WADE SNOWDON	IRD OFFICER	ARLPI	0782 807 156 pressing_forward@hotmail.com
15	MR AVOLA MARK			0772 494 881 avolamark@yahoo.co.uk
16	HON. MARGRET ODONG	LCV COUNCILOR/ DRPT	AMURU	0772 975 260 ayugiodong@yahoo.com
17	MR. NYEKO JAMES	PROGRAMME COORDINATOR	ARLPI	0777 364 033 nyekojms@yahoo.co.uk
18	HON. LAKONY MICHAEL	SPEAKER DLG/DRPT	AMURU	0782 777 855 konzomike@yahoo.com
19	HON. ODONGKARA LILLY	DEPUTY SPEAKER/PPF	PADER	0392 944 450 lianpod@yahoo.com
20	HON. ONGOM SANTO SAN	LCV COUNCILOR & C/MAN PPF	PADER	0772 868 184
21	MR. OLWENY RAY	SECRETARY TO RWODI	KKA KITGUM/PADER	0782 570 786 rayolweny@gmail.com
22	SR. MARGRET ACHENG	DIRECTOR & COUNSELOR	CARITAS	0772 514 611 srceng@yahoo.co.uk
23	MR. OCHAN GEORGE	PROGRAMME OFFICER	ARLPI - GULU	0772 556 538 ochangeorge@yahoo.co.uk
24	MRS ROSALBA OYWA	COORDINATOR &FOUNDER	COPA & PVP	0772 586 779 ato_rmoywa@yahoo.co.uk
25	MR. OJARA COSMAS	JOURNALIST	102 MEGA FM	0772 983 674 ojaraochieng@yahoo.com
26	MISS ABER MARGRET	PROGRAMME ASSISTANT	JPC GANAL	0782 264 347 abbyparrey@yahoo.com
28	MR. OPIRA	DIRECTOR	GLACCR	0774 397 173

	ROBERT MR. OPIRA			glaccr@yahoo.com
29	SILVESTER	DEPUTY RDC/KJFP	KDLG	0772514189/0755514189
30	MR. KIZITO NORBERT	FINANCE OFFICER	ARLPI	0782 533 654 okotkizito@yahoo.com
31	MR. AYELLA JIMMY GEORGE	C/MAN STEERING COMMITTEE	KJFP	0772671376/0714560089 jimmygeorgea@yahoo.com
32	FR. JULIUS ORACH	C/MAN WELFARE	ARLPI	0772 526 793
33	MGNR. MATTHEW OJARA	CORE TEAM MEMBER	ARLPI	matojara@yahoo.com