

11-1-2011

Public Hearing Transcripts - Uganda (Kiryandongo) - RTJRC01.11 (Youth Centre, Kiryandongo) (Women's Hearing)

Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/tjrc-core>

Recommended Citation

Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission, "Public Hearing Transcripts - Uganda (Kiryandongo) - RTJRC01.11 (Youth Centre, Kiryandongo) (Women's Hearing)" (2011). *I. Core TJRC Related Documents*. 137.
<https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/tjrc-core/137>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya at Seattle University School of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in I. Core TJRC Related Documents by an authorized administrator of Seattle University School of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact coteconor@seattleu.edu.

**ORAL SUBMISSIONS MADE TO THE TRUTH, JUSTICE AND
RECONCILIATION COMMISSION ON TUESDAY 1ST
NOVEMBER, 2011 AT THE YOUTH CENTRE KIRYADONGO,
UGANDA (Women Public Hearing)**

PRESENT

Margaret Wambui Shava	-	The Presiding Chair, Kenya
Getrude Chawatama	-	Commissioner, Zambia
Ms. Patricia Nyaundi	-	Commission Secretary

(Opening Prayers)

(The Commission commenced at 1.25 p.m.)

The Commission Secretary (Ms. Nyaundi): Thank you very much for the prayers and for the songs. At this particular moment, we would like to start our meeting. I know this Commission came here last and we heard some pre-hearings with you. We informed you in length how the Commission was established and its mandate. In brief, this Commission is looking if there will be reconciliation in our country Kenya. As we continue talking about the reconciliation, it is best to have a record to see what type of historical injustices have happened in our beloved country Kenya.

It was also the objective of the Commission that those whose rights were violated are identified and justice done to them. As you are seated today as our sisters from Kenya, our objective is that as a Commission we have seen that there are some injustices that women are undergoing and that they are supposed to be given a separate platform so that they can speak.

In our traditional norms, it is not easy for a woman to be given an opportunity in public forum so that she gets a chance of expressing her issues. As we are here today, let us use our time in a good manner. Do not be like me who speaks at length. If you are given a microphone take note of time. You should consider there is your sister who also wants to speak.

I will give the opportunity to the Commissioners to identify themselves to you. After that, we will start our discussions. I will just appeal to you to wait to be given the microphone. When you get the microphone, mention your name and then start talking.

Commissioners, Rebecca was telling me as you can see we have children and also the youth. When we start our discussion officially the youth or children will be given the first opportunity to speak and then they will leave. I would like to invite the Commissioners to identify themselves.

(The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava)

introduced herself and the other Commissioners)

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): I greet you in the name of our Lord. I am very happy to be here although I would have preferred to have met you in Kenya. This is God's will. Even when you read in the Bible, there are certain times when God allowed His people to be forcibly taken out of their homes and taken to another country and that is how the Lord preserved a lot of lives. For me, meeting you here in Uganda is a sign that you serve a God who is faithful and who brought you here to preserve you because he has a plan and a purpose for your life.

So, as much as it is a very sad time for me and even for you let us see the hand of God in how you came to be in Uganda.

I am happy to be here with the children; Antony and all the young ones. Thank you for coming out to meet with us. God bless and thank you.

I was born and brought up in Kenya. I was educated mainly in Kenya and so I know what Kenya can do. Meeting you here also makes me see very clearly that although our country can really help us, our country can also really fail us. We want to listen to you as the young people of Kenya and as the women of Kenya because when we write our report which we will give to the President and which Parliament, must by law, make sure is enforced, we want to be sure that your voice is there.

Kenya is a country of many firsts. Kenya has done many things very well. However, this is the first time to my knowledge that Kenya has refugees. That is not a good thing although as my colleague has said good things may come out of that. So, we are here to listen to you, we are here to give you hope and we are here to carry your voice back home to Kenya to make sure that when people are talking about how we can become a stronger nation, your recommendations are also in there. We have listened to women wherever we have gone. This is the first time we have had the privilege of listening to the young people. This is because of many issues such as the manner in which convention dictates that we engage with young people and children. It is also because of such issues as the school term and school holidays. So, in terms of another first, this is the first time we are listening to young people. That is a positive thing and we look forward to listening to you.

I will not talk a lot. This is your time. Patricia, you will lead us in the proceedings.

The Commission Secretary (Ms. Nyaundi): Thank you Commissioner. At this particular time, I would like to give a chance to any youth who can speak to the Commissioners. This Commission is looking into different injustices; there is destruction of property, forceful evictions, marginalization as a community, rape and very many injustices as you understand them. We can say that is torture and suffering to human beings. Do the youths want to speak?

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): If you want to say something about how your life is here or you want to address something, do so. You maybe want to tell something that happened to your brother or sister, if you want to sing or to dance just come forward. You have been spotted young lady, do not hide there. Come forward.

Ms. Virginia: Thank you for this opportunity. I am sorry but I prefer speaking in English. I am called Virginia. I am a Kenyan and a refugee. I am a youth and I am sorry I was not well prepared for this. However, I think I can say something little. As the youth, we are facing many challenges for example; we have got some people who have good faith. They have sponsored our education, however, we stop at a certain level. Despite the fact that we are here and they have paid our school fees, we have nowhere to go from there. As is the culture here, most girls get married at a tender age and do not see their future as being bright. I guess the main challenge we are facing as the youth here is that we will not have a future because we stop at Senior Six and we do not get the chance to go to a higher institution of learning.

Some of us want to be lawyers, others doctors and others politicians. However we cannot do this if we are left to stay in the villages because we do not have a chance to go to school. Back in Kenya, I guess we could get these chances because our parents would be working and earning and pay our fees. Here, we cannot say they are getting that much money to take us to school and get that further education.

The Presiding Chair has said we will talk tomorrow as the youth so I was just giving a shadow of what we go through. I hope we will meet you tomorrow and we talk more about what we are facing. You have given this chance to the women who are our mothers. We would like to respect that. I guess we will speak more on this tomorrow.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank all the visitors who are here today because of us. With this I would like to say thank you and may God bless you.

Commissioner Chawatama: Thank you very much young lady. You sound just as beautiful as you look. I believe that you have a bright future. You were not wrong in desiring what you desire for the youth. Your message is very clear and I am already having some thoughts which we will share tomorrow.

The Presiding Chair (Commissioners Shava): Virginia, all I want to say for now is that when you speak I look at you, the confidence with which you present, the orderly manner in which you present your thoughts even though you say you are not prepared, I see a leader. Be encouraged. Can we have somebody else? There are no boys or the boys have been daunted by Virginia's excellent presentation? Have you been defeated before you even start?

Mr. Mwangi: I am Mwangi.

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): Mwangi, how are you?

Mr. Mwangi: I am fine.

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): You are in which class?

Mr. Mwangi: I do not go to school. I am sick.

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): We will look into that. You will speak to Rebecca so that we will see how we will assist you.

Thank you very much for greeting us.

The Commission Secretary (Ms. Nyaundi): I would like to thank the youths. You have also had a promise that there will be a short meeting for you tomorrow. So, I will just like you to leave in a peaceful way unless someone has raised a hand but I have not seen it. I would like to ask the youth to leave in a peaceful way so that we can continue with the women's hearing.

Mwangi, you will go with Rebecca and tell her your problems.

Ms. Monica Nyambura: Thank you very much our visitors. We are grateful for your coming to hear our concerns. My name is Monica Nyambura, I come from Malaba. I would like to speak about what happened to me in Narok in 1992. We were staying with the Maasais and the Kalenjins there. After some time they started turning their backs on us saying we should move from that place. We, however, did not imagine that such a thing can come up. We were proud of our country. One day we were raided by youths from the Kalenjini and Maasai communities. We tried to defend ourselves but it was not possible because they had *pangas*. They were slaughtering and killing the Kikuyus. They killed the youth above 14 years and adult men. The women ran away with their children. At that time I was in school. When we moved from that place, our houses were burnt and property destroyed.

When the police came instead of arresting people, they were just shooting and taking dead bodies to the vehicles. Those who were slaughtering people were going on. Despite hearing gun shots they continued killing people. So many of us were killed, our parents lost property and the children did not get education. We went to Nakuru because we could not stay in any town. Our parents tried left and right until they came to a place called Busia.

I got a man in Busia who married me and we went to Malaba. My father and others have tried following up the issue of the parcel of land that they lost but up to date we have not got it back. They are cultivating it. We married at a tender age because our parents did not have a way of educating us. Families were separated and others remained orphans.

In 2007 during the post election violence, we heard our neighbours; the Tesos say that we should go back to Othaya. We ignored that because we were sure our Government was there to defend every Kenyan citizen. We stood firm knowing that the Government

would be there to defend us. However, on 30th December 2007 when Kibaki was declared the President, we were assaulted and Kikuyu houses burnt down. Others were killed.

A neighbour was hit on the head and taken to hospital but at the hospital the doctors refused to treat him. They told him, “Work should continue”. He went back home. We sought refuge at a church called Full Gospel. We could not go out because our enemies were out there waiting. We called the police so that we could be taken from that place but the police demanded Kshs1,000. Policemen then came and took us away. However, as we were moving out, we saw our neighbours; the Tesos going into our houses. When we informed the police about this, they said, “Work should continue”. We went to the police station where we stayed for two days.

After two days we wanted to cross to St. Jude. As we were crossing, one of my aunts asked the police, “Odhiambo, what kind of work is the police doing? Is shooting a job?” He told us, “You are going to Uganda, go and tell Museveni those tricks of coming to show the President how to steal votes should stop”. We went to St. Jude but then went back when we heard that people were recording statements about their properties. During that time, one policeman whom I could not identify asked, “I hear you are speaking as if you are Kikuyus, what tribe do you belong to?” Because we were at the police station we said loudly that we were Kikuyus. The policeman said, “If you have a parcel of land, sell it in time because after five years we are going to evict you to Othaya again”. I did not record the statement. I went back to St. Jude and stayed there.

One evening, we saw two people running from the kitchen. As we were wondering what was happening, one person said, “I know these two people, they are the Tesos that we were living with on the upper side”. So, we wondered why they had come to our kitchen and they had left running. We did not bother much, so we proceeded to the kitchen to serve food. As we were in the process of serving this food, we realized there was something unusual, it had a lot of foam. We then called the police who told us not to eat the food since it could have been poisoned. A test was run and it was found to have had poison in it. God had saved us!

After this incident, we crossed over and went to a place called Mulanda. We kept hearing how people were suffering in Kenya. We decided to continue with our lives and those of our children. The UNHCR registered us and we continued with our lives. We registered as refugees and settled in Kiryandongo.

(The witness broke down)

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): We are very sorry. We will wait for you. I do not know whether there is a person who would like to sing to encourage us.

(A song was sung)

Ms. Monica Nyambura: When we came to this place, we really suffered. At that time, our neighbours were Sudanese and we did not have a common language for

communication. We were the first refugees at this place. We thought that we could find food and drinks, but there was nothing. Initially, we used to sleep hungry and just feed our children on oranges. My child went to school but when he saw the condition of the refugees, he refused to go to school. He told me, "Go and speak to Kibaki and Raila so that we can go back to our country". My child really suffered.

We could not even get treatment in hospitals. They gave priority to their people. Even Mama Njeri suffered so much in hospital and in the process lost her child. I remember Pastor Mwangi who would tell us, "It is my wish that one day the Government of Kenya will give us farms so that we go back to Kenya". He wanted to go back home. It is unfortunate because he developed diabetes and died. We buried him in May this year.

After a year's stay here, we heard that the Government of Kenya denied ever having refugees in Uganda. They said those in Uganda were business people. This really pained us but we had no option. We voted for a Government that was not even recognizing us.

Many children do not go to school here. Many girls have run away and are married. Most of the youth have been infected with sexually transmitted diseases. It is painful for us women. We lacked education and our children are also going to lack education. Now, we are asking ourselves, "What is the fate of our future?"

I pray that if there is something that the Kikuyus did to Kenyans that makes us a target, let us sit down and we have a dialogue. Why is the Government not able to tell us what we did? It is better for us to have peace in our country. We are not happy here. We are suffering. If you can stay here for two or three days you will see. You just see us well dressed and you may think we have good lives. Our husbands have turned against us. Personally, my husband said, "Even if you register that you want to go back to Kenya, I will not go back". At the moment if I want to record a statement he says, "Go and do not come back". Only the elders are standing by me, but I want to record a statement because my country is my country. My husband has turned against me and even if we are together we are not one thing. People do not have any hope and all the burden lies on the women. It is my appeal that peace should prevail in our country.

Sometimes when you get a small ratio, the man sells everything and the children are told to go to the farm. So, women are very oppressed here and we are glad you have come to hear our cries.

The Commission Secretary (Ms. Nyaundi): We are very sorry, Mama Monica. How old were you when you moved from Narok?

Mrs. Monica Nyambura: I was in Standard Seven.

The Commission Secretary (Ms. Nyaundi): I do not have any more questions and I ask the Commissioners to ask their questions.

Mrs. Ann Wambui Kun'gu: Commissioners, I am greeting you. My name is Anne Kung'u and I come from Busia, Nambale Constituency. I had stayed in Nambale for 25

years. On 29th December, 2007, they announced the election results at about 5.00 p.m. I am a farmer and I have sugar-cane. I also used to rear pigs and I had a big shop. When I was going home, I saw many people gathered in the shops. When I got to the shop, I saw some youths throwing stones. I did not even enter the house but I diverted to a private hospital. I could not see my husband, children and grand children. I continued hiding in the private hospital. I saw some youths who are my neighbours. At that time, I did not know where my family members were. I stayed there for the night. I was locked into the pharmacy rooms. At that time, they wanted to kill people and I thought that they would kill me. At around 9.00 p.m. my husband came back with the police and I was taken away. We went to the police station where I found very many Kikuyus who lived at that place. All those who were there did not have anything. They told me that the situation was bad. We wanted the police to take us back to our houses to pick blankets to cover the children. They told us that they had been instructed to take care of us and not our property. Meanwhile, people were looting property from our houses. In the morning, the looting continued. Things were being looted and others thrown on the roads. After a short while, there was fire. They burnt everything, including the shops. We did not manage to rescue anything from the shops. At around 10.00 a.m. I was told that people were also burning the farms. I pleaded with a police officer to go and prevent them from burning the houses but it was all in vain. They burnt my property again. There were some vehicles that had not been burnt. We heard of a plot to burn the people too. So, we prepared to run away. At around 7.00 p.m. we boarded vehicles and headed to Busia Police Station. We stayed there until dawn. There was nothing in the police station, not even food or water.

On 1st January, 2008 people started crossing to Uganda. The following day, we were told to go to Uganda to get some assistance from the Red Cross. We were put in a certain school in Uganda. We cooked for the children in the open. The following day, very many Kikuyus arrived there. The Red Cross gave us food like potatoes and we were instructed to cook in one sufuria and sub-divide it among the people.

The biggest reason why people fought in our country is because of our politician. He does not want many tribes at that place. They told us to go to Othaya. They said that they do not want tribes to mix. The politicians were saying that it was time for *majimbo*, meaning that people should go back to their homes. That is what we did not understand because we knew we were in our country. We were then taken to Mulanda where we became refugees. The then Minister of State for Special Programmes pleaded with us to go back to Kenya. At that time, we were getting reports that the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kenya were going hungry. That is why we did not come back to Kenya. We stayed there for a long time until we were brought here in Kiryandogo. We underwent many problems here. When we were in Kenya, we were managing life because we had organizations like the Kenya Women Organization but when we came to Uganda, we started suffering. We depend on Red Cross and humanitarian aid. When we were in Kenya, we were feeding people but now we depend on people. I had one daughter who went to Kenya to live with the aunt. She had completed Form Four. After she went to Nakuru and lived there for some time, when she came back she was pregnant. She told me that she suffered while in Kenya. There was no food where she went to live. She was impregnated by a school boy. She wanted to abort but I refused. I also had a son who was

in Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. I used to pay all the school fees. In 2008, he could not continue with his education due to lack of fees. At that time, I was already in Uganda. So, he could not sit for the exams. My daughter gave birth to a baby girl. She then left to go and look for a job. She got a job as a house help but she left because she was being harassed by the employer.

In December, 2008, my son came here and wondered whether he would complete his studies. I sold all the maize that I had harvested and gave him Kshs60,000. We also got contributions from several people to enable my son complete his education. Although he has graduated, he really suffered. As you know, it is the mothers who take care of the children. Women are really suffering because, even if they earn something little, it is taken by the husband. Those are the problems that we undergo.

We are very happy that you have come to listen to us. Some of us were living our lives as farmers and business people, but we are now here just like that. As we are here, because it is not our country, one cannot even invest in business or even build a home. So, we want to come back to our country. We are not happy here. Although it is the will of God to come and live here, we will preach the word of God. There are people here who did not know God but they now know him. Staying here is difficult because of the children. I had grand children who were schooling in Kenya, but here it is difficult because the education system is different. There is also the problem of language. Here, pupils are taught in the native language of Acholi and that creates a communication problem. Now the children do not want to go to school. They want to go back to Kenya.

Regarding healthcare, it is difficult here. My son fell ill and I could not get any medical attention. When the illness became intense, he was referred to Kiryandongo.

The doctor told me that his condition was not bad and I could go back the following day. At that time, my son had a headache. At around 9.00 a.m., he was given medicine and told to sleep. After sometime, he lost his strength and his eyes changed colour. I asked the doctor why he was behaving that way and I was told that he would be okay. I called my husband and when he came, he found that he was unconscious. At that time, my son could not speak. At around 9.00 p.m., he passed away. I remained with his wife and her three children. The children are now a burden because the mother wants to go back to her parents' home. Now, I remained with two of the children. I now take care of the children. As women, we really suffer. In Kenya, we used to get funds through women organizations. I was a businesswoman and could be able to pay loans. For the short time we have stayed in Uganda, we do not have anything other than clothing. We have become poor. We only receive sympathy from good Samaritans from Kenya. They send us clothes to wear.

We have accepted to go back to Kenya but we fear for our lives. We witnessed very many things that were brought about by politics. Police should have been able to prevent the looting. One policeman killed two people when he was preventing the youths from looting my property. So, he also ran away with us. He is now a refugee like us. His senior was questioning him why he had killed people because they had been instructed not to

kill. They were supposed to only take care of those who were being evicted. I am appealing to our country so that we can be taken back and be given some funds to continue with life. Many women have been separated from their husbands. So, when you go back, please, look for some settlement for us. We want to settle down and educate our children. That is my cry and may God bless you.

The Commission Secretariat (Ms. Nyaundi): Thank you very much. I do not know whether the Commissioners have questions for you?

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): I want to thank Mama Kong'u for her testimony which covered many issues. Other people have told us why children do not want to go to school, but you have managed to make us understand the difficulties they are having in school. The education system is different because there are no multiple choice questions. So, a small child may not be able to answer the way he is supposed to. Also the language of instruction is not understandable to the children. That is causing problems even in health institutions. You have also said that you experience discrimination in terms of provision of health services because you are Kenyans. You have also told us that when you were in Kenya, you were the economic mainstay of your family. But here, you have to depend on the men who are not able to make ends meet. So, the institution of the family is in difficulty and marriages are also in difficulty. Another person told us that children are not able to go to school beyond a certain point. So, they are engaging in behaviours which are not constructive. So, the girls become pregnant very early and the young men are getting sexually transmitted diseases.

Since we have limited time and we want to capture all the issues, I would request that we hear from somebody who is going to speak about a different issue, perhaps someone who is going to give us a different perspective from a different community.

The Commission Secretary (Ms. Nyaundi): As the Commissioner has said, we have heard about the post election violence of 2008 and the evictions of 1992. So, if you would like to give a chance to four more people. I urge them to speak in brief.

I have been informed that there are youths who would like to speak. I would like to remind them that we shall have a special meeting tomorrow. Let us proceed.

Mrs. Teresa Nafula: My name is Teresa Nafula from Mt. Elgon. What I have seen and what I continue to see in my life has made a lot of difference since 1992. From 1992, there have been clashes and I ran away in August before the elections. We left food in the farms. We rented a house in Bungoma. We were told that peace was back and we went back. In 1997 again, there were clashes. Normally, people go away before elections. In November, 2006 I saw people moving their belongings to different places. I asked them what was happening, but they did not answer me. One day in the morning, I saw two bodies carried away. There was another body that was found near my home. It was badly cut. I told my children to prepare to run away. Police from Chebukube came near our place. I could see them from home. When you are in this side of Uganda, you can see my home very well. We were warned that we would also be slashed if we went back. At that time, we were living with strangers in Uganda. On the other side, people were burning

houses and looting property. I saw my house burning down. I had not carried anything from the house. It was the year of elections and things got worse. I was in Uganda. I did not have food or anything but still, I could not go back home. On the other side of Kenya, people were being killed. I was afraid for my life and the safety of my family. My husband had left in the morning, but he has never been seen again. One day, they said that they wanted to register all the refugees. I saw bad things in Uganda. When they brought food for Kenyans, it was taken by Ugandans. They used to ask for a list of names of the refugees, but it was the Ugandans who had been listed. We were advised to go to Mulanda where we would get enough food. When we arrived in Mulanda, we stayed there for five months before being brought here. I had bought a farm four years ago, although I did not have a title deed. I had bought the land from a Sabaot. Right now, I hear that there is no land again because I do not have a title deed. We are now here with our children. It is especially difficult for us who do not have husbands. Healthcare is a problem here. Life is very difficult for us here as women. We are asking the Government to help us. There is a neighbour who was called Simiyu and his brother was called Patrick Wafula. Their houses were bigger than this hall but they were destroyed. We watched as they destroyed their houses. They destroyed houses belonging to other tribes. If you go there, you will find the houses that belong to Sabaots still standing. The houses of Bukusus were destroyed completely. You cannot even tell who causes those fights. I do not have much to tell you except that God bless you.

Ms. Anna Muthoni Mburu: My name is Anna Muthoni Mburu. I come from Mumias. That is where I was a business lady. I used to buy commodities from Kampala and bring them to Kenya. Two weeks before the election date, some politicians came. They were from the ODM party. They said that they did not want people called “Kikuyu” here. They said that Kikuyu were used to having big shops and big jobs, whereas the locals just cycle *boda boda*. They said that we should either start cycling *boda boda* or we go back to Othaya. On the day of the election, we voted and on 30th December, 2007 after it was announced that Kibaki had won the presidential election, violence broke out. They started burning our houses and stealing our things. On 28th December, 2007 we went to the police station and recorded a statement. We told them what had happened to us. The police officers told us that we should contribute Kshs500 each and then they would give us security. We did not have an alternative. So, we paid them. They said that they were going to protect us. Truly, that night of Friday we slept well. On Saturday, we also slept well. On Sunday, when it was announced that Kibaki had won, things became worse. The police officers could not help us anymore. So, people came and started destroying our houses. They were burning and destroying things. I was just there in Mumias. I was in a centre called Nabongo. They came and started destroying everything in the houses, and taking away our things. We ran to the police station where we had slept.

In the morning, I told my husband: “It is better that we go home”, because we did not have even blankets. I wanted to go back and find out whether they had left behind anything, so that we could cover our children and ourselves. When I went back, I found people in our house destroying things. They asked what I had to get from the house. They said that the things were theirs, and that we had been pretending that they were our things. They said: “Kibaki has been giving you things but you now see that these are our things.” I begged them to help me by allowing me to carry even a few of my clothes. I

told them that I wanted to take with me at least a *sufuria* to go and cook some food. One of them allowed me to take a few clothes. I left the rest of the items with them.

On my way back, I came across a group of people. This group was not very forgiving. They started beating me up. I fell down. One hit me with a stone on my back. They took everything I had taken from my house and started beating me up. I left the scene and went to the police station. There was no doctor there. The people who were patients at St. Mary's Mumias Hospital were not there. I was in pain for two weeks. I did not have hope until the day I left to go to Nakuru Show Ground.

At Nakuru Show Ground, I was given some medicine for a few days but they were not successful in healing me. One day, my sister told me that they were in Mulanda. She told me that I should go there and see if things were going to be better for me. There were white people there who were treating people. So, I decided to go there. I left my husband at Nakuru Show Ground. From the showground, my husband tried to go back home, in Kikuyu land. Back in Kikuyu land, our brothers had joined the *Mungiki* group. Failure to join the group would have meant my husband being killed by the group so, he followed me to Mulanda. I continued getting treatment from the hospital in Mulanda until the day we came to Kiryadongo. I was taken to Hoima, where I was admitted for a month. After that, I was taken to another hospital called "Mulago", which is a national hospital in Uganda. I have been getting treatment from there for the years I have been here.

I would like to say that I have not received any effective treatment. I am still not doing well. I am still not healed yet. The doctors said that I have problems with my bones, that there are bones which are dislocated. They said that I need to go to theatre. So, they only give me medicine. They told me that I should never bend, and that I should not carry anything. I have been given bed rest. They said that this operation is going to be risky, if it is done at Mulago because they do not have a doctor who specialises in bones. They advised: "It would be better if you had gone back to Nairobi, but now you are in Uganda. Going back home is hard."

So, I have just been staying like that, and just taking medicine. They have been trying to do physiotherapy. The doctor has already said that physiotherapy cannot heal my bones; I need to undergo an operation. I have two children. My last born is seven-and-a-half years. This situation has made it impossible for me to have another child. The doctor has also said that it would be riskier for me to have a pregnancy. My children are still small. The small one always asks: "Why did you agree to vote for Kibaki? Until when are we going to suffer? Mum, you should not have voted for Kibaki." He even wonders why we cannot "buy" another child. I am so hurt because I do not want to stay with two children. I would like to have another baby. All this is happening because of an election yet I have not benefitted in any way. I voted just like any other Kenyan.

I do not have much to say but only to ask if there is a way you can help me, in terms of treatment. I will be happier. Last week, I saw a doctor who referred me to Mulago but I still do not have transport to go to Mulago to get medicine. So, I would like to plead with you, if you can help me, so that I get treatment.

Secondly, I would like to speak on behalf of my children. My young child keeps saying that I am suffering because of voting. It seems that children are confused in a way. As much as I cannot explain why voting makes him not to get a brother or sister, I understand that he is suffering. He says: "You voted. We do not eat. We do not sleep." I do not know what you are going to do as a Commission, so that we can help these children. Children aged three years and above were there when these things happened. What can we do to heal them? How can we heal their bodies and souls?

Ms. Judith Wamalwa: My name is Judith Wamalwa from Mount Elgon. I was not born in Mount Elgon. I was born in Bungoma District, Bumula Division. The conflict found me in Mount Elgon. For sure, when we went to

We went to Mt. Elgon to buy plots but the people there said: "You have come but you will not stay here, because we do not welcome visitors."

So, we just went to there and stayed but we witnessed a lot of things because they were saying that there was a place called "Sindokoo". During the election, there were fears but we stayed because of the grace of God. In 2007, I saw and believed that what I was hearing was true. I am not going to speak a lot because the people of Mt. Elgon have spoken. All the testimonies are alike because all of us are refugees.

What caused our eviction is discrimination, hatred and tribalism. I am appealing to you, as a Commission, that if you can address these issues, our country can be peaceful. Where there is no peace, there will be no development. As women, we are the people who move the country forward. If you educate one girl, you have educated a whole nation. For sure, as women, we are devoted. Even in this camp, we are really devoted but we do not want to be refugees. We are amongst you, as you are with us.

I am just praying, on behalf of fellow women. We are in Uganda but remember how you came to remember us and came here today, so that you can know how we are going on. My appeal to you is that if you are our sisters, for sure, having come here to lament with us, and having heard our testimonies, let the truth prevail. So, if you go back to Kenya, you should assist us by lobbying the NGOs. Although there are already NGOs here, we need you, as the Government of Kenya, to remember that there are women somewhere who are refugees and our country should assist them.

For instance, there is discrimination here. Why do I say so? They are helping us but they have taken most of our girls aged between 20 and 22 years. As a mother, I wake up in the morning and go to farm, so that I can feed my children. If I get skills, I do not know whether I can live such a life. So, I am asking you, on behalf of my fellow women, that you remember and assist us. The Government of Kenya should bring us facilities, so that we can feel that we are also at the same level with other women in Kenya. That is my prayer. Assist us along those lines.

May God bless you.

Ms. Jane Wangui: My name is Jane Wangui. I do not want to speak a lot because most of the things have been said. If all the women who are here could get a chance to speak, you would be astonished. As a person, I am elderly. I have given birth but I do not have a child. It is not that I gave birth and the children died. I took care of my children. I struggled with life. My children attained a certain level. The children of these women are just wondering on the roads. They do not know where they are. I came here with the children I had thinking that they would be safe. There is no security here. I do not want to tell you that this place is not all that safe. Maybe, it is just because of what we saw in Kenya. We just want to take heart.

I ran away to this place with two children. One was about 14 years old. We struggled with the doctors, thinking that the children had malaria. I started to seek assistance from my neighbours. We took her to Buyale District Hospital. When we reached there, the child was diagnosed with all kinds of illnesses. She did not have malaria. She had yellow fever and other diseases. We came back here and the child went to school. When we went back to hospital, the child was injected with quinine, which caused the girl to become mentally challenged. From that time, I removed the syringes and went back home. It was painful because my child told me: "I do not believe that we can undergo such a life. You have sold the maize and taken me to hospital. What are we going to eat?" I told her: "I will use the remaining flour to prepare porridge, which we will take."

Since she had a headache, I told her not to go and fetch water. I let her young sister go and fetch water. When she came back, she prepared lunch, which we ate with some of our neighbours. My daughter told me: "I did not get satisfied but just let me sleep." After some time, my daughter started screaming, complaining of headache. When we arrived at the hospital, the same doctor injected her with quinine. The situation deteriorated and at 2.00 my daughter passed away. I do not have a father or a mother. That was the child I was depending on. I went through many problems. I cannot say that I have seen anything good in offices. It is just that the world is like my feast. When we say "Kenya" and say "Uganda", I just see my fist. When I go out there, I feel like I am falling. Why? I went to the office for assistance to get a place to bury my daughter. I wrapped the body of my daughter in a blanket because we did not have anything. What made me happy was that Kenyans contributed money and enabled me to bury the child back at home. They stood with me until I buried my daughter.

When you mention Kenya, it is just like telling me to put my leg in burning charcoal. I have lost my family. I have lost my house. My matrimonial family members do not want me because of one or two issues. Even at my home, I cannot explain anything. I do not know what Kenya can do for me, so that I can feel better. If Kenya will be built in Heaven, I will accept it. If God intervenes, I will feel happy with Kenya. We have young children. A child asks you: "What is being raped?" because she has heard you say that you were raped. How would you explain it to such a child when you are having a meal?

There are women who were raped. We are given 15 kilogrammes of grains per month. That was what we sold to go to hospital. I have been travelling to Kampala for

medication. It gets to a time when you even sell your clothes. A Good Samaritan gives you a dress but you sell it, so that you can go for medication. It is really painful. People say: "These are the people who are being raped." Even when you walk around, you hear people say: "These are the people who have been raped." Even if you go to somebody's place, they serve you in utensils that they know they will not use again.

Whenever I see the word "Kenya", I do not feel that it is the same Kenya that I knew previously. I know that Kenya is a country which would love and guide me. Irrespective of whether I voted for Kibaki or Raila, I have not seen anybody who has come to find out what my problems are. There was a time I was at Tororo. There was not even a word of apology from the Government. Perhaps it was said somewhere else. When you tell us that you are from Kenya, we think that you are from a good place.

However, as people who witnessed the incidents that happened, whenever you mention Kenya, something pains us. I was sitting with my young daughter and told her: "Go and greet the children." She told me: "These visitors have told us to go back to Kenya, where they looted our property and burnt our houses. I will not go and greet them. If these guests are going to Kenya, let us go to the other side of the hill. I am not going back to Kenya. Kenya has made our father go away. Kenya made my sister die. Kenya made my brother die. Kenya has made you, mother, not to even wash your clothes. You carry blankets. You carry a *sufuria*."

A 13 year old child leaves school to come and cook for me. Recently, she was called to the office of the UNHCR. She said that she was tired of going to school. When I am referred to Kampala, she is the one who assists me to go to hospital. I am operated on, it is that same daughter who helps me. On taking the examination, my daughter fails. Recently, she told me that she did not want to go to school. She has told me that she is not going to learn. She would rather stay at home and go to farm. Who is helping me? It is only the daughter. It is not that there are no people around, but if you cannot speak the Ugandan languages, you cannot be assisted.

Even if the Prime Minister was here, he would have said the same. You must know how to speak the Ugandan languages, or else you look for a doctor and bribe him in order to get assistance. You do not even have the money with which to bribe anybody. If even getting food is difficult, how can you have money with which to bribe a doctor? If you are supposed to go to Kampala, you sell maize, so that you can have money for transport. So, we are just appealing. We can express ourselves, so that you can have a picture of the kind of life we are living. What will happen to our children? The Government should do something about our children. This is not the end of everything. Our children have said that they are tired of education. We can forget but our children have no future. The girls have been harassed. We do not know what to tell our teenage children. What can you tell the daughter in your house, who has been raped, so that she can stay with you in the house? She also becomes a burden. This is not a hospital. Even if you go there, if you cannot speak their language, you cannot be attended to. You just lie there and get medication the following day.

The Government should take care of our children. Our children who were two or three years old during the post-election violence witnessed what happened. So, they are tired of Kenya. When you say “Kenya” to them, they say: “Policemen in Kenya kill people. Houses are being burnt in Kenya. People are killing each other.” Although the children can remember life in Kenya, it is difficult. Today should not be the final day to interact with them. Have time to stay with our children and encourage them because they feel that if they do not get education, life will have nothing to offer them. Others go into early marriages. Some mothers have started taking care of grandchildren, even though time is not yet ripe for us to take care of grandchildren.

In Kenya, it is like an abomination for a child of 13 years to give birth. At the moment, we are trying to take care of the children but you just get tired and give up. We would like you to set aside some time and speak to our children and give them the way forward, if it is good. However, what I saw, and given where I am now, when I hear of Kenya, I feel like you are taking me back to fire.

The Commission Secretary (Ms. Nyaundi): Thank you very much, my fellow sisters. All of you who have spoken, we are really apologetic at this time. We have to conclude these hearings. As we approach the end of this session, I would like to give this opportunity to one woman who will promise to be brief and wind up in a very good way.

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): Please, promise that you will be very brief. I will give a chance to three more women to speak. I would like you to be very brief because you have spoken a lot, and we have heard you. Due to time constraints, we are appealing that you be very brief.

Ms. Miriam Muthoni: My names are Miriam Muthoni from Malaba, Western Province. I will not mention the things that I went through because my friends have already mentioned them. I would like to say only three things, and Kenyans should hear them. The only things I would want is peace, love and friendship. When there is no friendship, it is not possible to have peace. Here, we have peace, but we do not know whether we can get back the peace that was there before the elections. I have lost my child. I came with him here. He told me: “I have never touched a *jembe* in my life. If this is the life we are going to lead, I cannot stay here.” He left and, to date, I do not know where he is. I have tried to call and ask people, but no one has come forward to say that he has seen my child.

How can you help me, so that we can have the peace that Kenya had, and so that we can have the kind of togetherness and peace that we had before? Both hon. Raila and President Kibaki should be told that we want peace, love and unity.

That is all that I have to say.

Ms. Celestine Musambi: I am Celestine Musambi. I am a Kamba from Mwingi. The post-election violence found me in Malaba. I did not expect it. I never expected that I would be here. It is just the voting that was done for Kibaki and Raila. That vote has

made my life to be the way it is today. That caused me to sleep in the forest. That was my first time for me to have to sleep in a forest. When it was mentioned, I was still in school. I was studying in Kamba land. When I completed Standard Eight, I did not have school fees for me, because my father is handicapped. My mother also did not have money for my upkeep. I did not have anyone to support me. They were staying in Malaba. When I came, they told me that the only money they had was sufficient for renting a house and buying food. They did not have money to take me to school. So, I stayed in Malaba until I got a husband. I stayed together with my husband in Malaba. From 1996, I stayed in Malaba until 2007. My husband died before the violence. He left me with the children. The little money I had enabled me to continue with the business that I was doing. I was selling scrap metal. You know, this is a job that Kamba people like doing. When the violence started, it found me there.

I did not expect it. It did not discriminate. It just came to everyone. There were roadblocks and houses were burning. Everyone was telling us to prepare ourselves. It was on a Sunday. Even those who were cooking *ugali* just left it and ran to Uganda. I am very grateful to the Ugandan Government because they did not stop us from entering their country. They just left the gates open, so that we could just come into Uganda. Those who were unable to run went to the police stations. Those of us who ran to Uganda, the police here accepted us. They took us in on the first day. On the second day, we did not know where to sleep. At that time, if one asked you to marry them, you would just go. A man would tell you: "Welcome" and then you would just go and sleep. The next day we heard that people were being received at Saint Jude.

When we went to Saint Jude, they welcomed us, but not in a very good way. They kept us in classrooms that were full. People slept outside with their children and husbands. That was why some people started announcing that there were prostitutes at Saint Jude. The first time I heard that there were prostitutes in Muranda, but the Government of Uganda brought us security. They built for us houses. If you were a widow or a single mother, they would protect you. It was shocking for us. Three months later, we were told that we had to go back to Kenya. If you want to stay in Uganda, you had to go to Kiryandogo. We knew how the situation was in Kenya. Having witnessed houses being burnt and all our things having been destroyed, we decided to go with our people. Some people went back to Kenya. Some of those who went back to Kenya were killed.

For us, we came here. When we arrived here, we were shocked. We could not believe it. We expected a good place. We just found that it was not good. It is a park. You sleep and when you wake up, you find that you have been raped. So, we have just tried to live this kind of life. Until now, life here is not good. There are people here who have diseases called "clinical illnesses" which cannot be easily healed. We are here. We do not have hope. We have young children who do not go to school. They know that they have one parent who is sick. So, they refuse to go to school, because they do not have any hope. They know that if their parent die, they will remain without any hope. So, they feel that there is no point of going to school. We tried to hide these things from them but they are still worried. So, I am telling the Government of Kenya--- We do not want to go back. Or we could say that we want to go back. That is our country, and it is good. We are also

asking for capital with which to restart our lives, and for security and our children to be taken to school. That will be good for us. If there is not going to be security, even if you give us millions of shillings, personally, I will not go back because they will just do what they did last time.

Secondly, I am speaking on behalf of my life. I have five children. I am their father and mother. Since you came here, this is my first time to meet you. You came when I was in Mulago Hospital. You would not have found me because I was supposed to go back to see a doctor. I have a kidney problem. My breast also has a problem. They do not do operations on kidneys in Uganda. They have already examined me and said that on one side, I have two kidneys, and on the other side I have one kidney. So, I normally go there to get pain killers. In Uganda, they do not treat kidney diseases. I can only go to Kenya or abroad. How do I go to Kenya? I do not have money for medicine. That is my only prayer. Please, remember us. We are in trouble. Even though we are here, we still have many problems.

Thank you.

Ms. Ruth Wanjiku: My names are Ruth Wanjiku. I am from Mt. Elgon. I have been suffering since 1962, when I was still a young child. That was when my parents gave birth to me in Mt. Elgon. We have been renting houses. We have always been beaten up. We have had to run away many times in Bungoma District. After five years, we would go back. We would be beaten up again, and we run away. Again, we would go back. So, we have been living this way in Mt. Elgon. We have been living at the mercy of the *Janjaweed*. You could not go to the police. Again, you were to choose what you were going to ask for. You would also choose whether you wanted to face a gun or you wanted to pay. We have three tribes living around there, namely the Bukusu, Kikuyu and Kamba.

All the Bukusu houses were burnt. Those of us who were staying in town, we would be beaten up by members of the *Janjaweed*. We cannot go back because we do not know whether the *Janjaweed* are still there or they have been killed. My friends are telling me that they cannot go back since their houses were burnt. So, we are requesting the Government to provide us with homes far away from Mt. Elgon, so that we can be peaceful and live well.

Ms. Florence Ndung'u: My names are Florence Ndung'u. I am from Nambale. My Member of Parliament is hon. Okemo. He made me come to Kiryadongo. The PNU, Okemo, and President Kibaki have caused me to live this life. My husband was an agent of the President. When hon. Okemo was going round, he kept saying that Kikuyus should go to Othaya. My husband was an agent of Kibaki. So, on the day of voting, my husband was at Nambale Urban Poling Station. After the voting was done, my husband came back to town where he was attacked. They wanted to cut off his neck. They wanted him to give them the money he had got from Kibaki as an agent. Believe me or not, the sub-chief took away my husband. The head of police, Nambale, was there. They tried to kill my husband at posta. The chief asked the police: "Were you not seeing what was happening?" A policeman, who was a Nandi by tribe, shot two people. One person died

on the spot. My sister, who had come to visit us, was there. When she saw what was happening, she called her husband. Her husband was a senior officer. My sister's husband was in Nyeri. He is a Nandi tribesman. He was called Philemon Kipsang. When Kipsang heard this, he called the policeman at the scene and told him to take care of my husband. My husband was taken to the police patrol base. I was left with our children. My son, Thuo, was cut on the head. I did not know what to do.

I took him to the dispensary and I was told that the Kikuyus could not be treated there. When they shot a second bullet, my child tried to seek refuge in me because they were saying, maybe, the children of the Kikuyu should go back to Othaya. My children suffered and my sister went back to the patrol base and she said: "Let us go and look for the children." When my children were found, they were brought to the patrol base. At that time, my sister received a call from a police officer who was there and she was told that all the Kikuyus were going to be burned at Nambale.

We were transferred to Busia and we found that the DC was not present; then we were taken to Mulanda, where we stayed suffering and very many people came there in lorries to visit us. When they arrived at Busia, they also wanted to burn us again at that particular place. We told the Red Cross to take us back to Mulanda. When we were taken to Mulanda, we stayed there until the Government of Kenya came and found us there. It was so astonishing when Dr. Naomi Shaban came to visit us and told us that, we could not get assistance from the Government until we went back home. We were not amused. I had run to Mulanda for safety and my other children were Kenya.

I have really suffered. I do not know where my daughter is. She was taken by a Good Samaritan to Kasese where she was raped and later diagnosed to be HIV positive and with cancer. They wanted Kshs38, 000 to treat her while I was in Uganda at that time.

When we went to Mulanda, some people came from South Africa and took the responsibility of going to the Government of Kenya to find a way on how we could go back home. They went to Kenya called the elders who said: "There is no space for the Kikuyus here!" I went back to Nambale Patrol base and I was told that there was no space for us to go back home. That is when we asked ourselves, where were we to go.

Then we decided to go to Kiryandogo. When we arrived there, it was just a forest. There was no house in Uganda and you could not cut trees. We were sleeping with our children. Ten families could stay together. We stayed there for three months without food and there was nothing we could do as there was no assistance. The children ate rats and even snakes! If you bring snakes and rats here, they can eat. They say that they taste nice.

Thank you very much. We are just appealing to hon. Raila and President Kibaki to rescue us. When you go back to Kenya, we are just praying to God to guide you. We have learnt a lot here as our children are eating rats and, if you call them here, you will understand what they are going through. They know how to hunt for rats and it is painful. Children sleep here like orphans, because they do not have houses to stay in. The food from the United Nations is 15 kilogrammes and at times it is 12 kilogrammes. What can you do

with that if they do not have good schools where our children could go? There is nothing good.

Lastly, children who have finished school have nowhere to go. They are just indulging in prostitution; they do not even have motivation to go to school because they are just like orphans. I am praying for the Government of Kenya because we have seen much and we are now elderly. But when our children go back to Kenya, if they suffer the way they have suffered here, it can really be bad for our country.

I do not have much, but to wish you the best. May God of grace bless you. When you go back, thank Kibaki and Raila for the post-election violence. We have come to stay at Kiriandongo in a very sorrowful and a painful life.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Lucy Wangui: Thank you very much our visitors for visiting us today. My name is Lucy Wangui. For sure, my fellow women have spoken a lot from different parts, but I have not heard any of them talking about Eldoret. I am from Eldoret Church. I know you visited the church in Eldoret and you saw different graves. I am a neighbour to that church.

There is nobody who does not know what happened in Eldoret. Even God in Heaven knows. It is only the survivors who were--- I do not have much but I want to thank you for coming. We are trying to see if we can go back to Kenya in a good manner. We have not refused to go back because home is home, but we are praying that all those responsible in resettling us should set aside funds to give us farms so that we can lead a good life and also our children who witnessed violence that took place in 2007/2008 can try to forget and mind their future.

If you meet my daughter, she will tell you what she went through because it was just God and some individuals who saved us (the survivors). If you managed to take a child of your neighbour and throw outside the church, you do not even know whether yours has also been taken out. It was really astonishing and I know God was there for us. Imagine you are a parent and your child of three years has been thrown outside the church through the window, she could not cry. It was just following others where they could be running to. So, we can say that God intervened at that time.

It is good that you have come to ask us to go back to our country, Kenya. It should be a new Kenya with new things. There were some speakers who mentioned that we sat down and we had a discussion on how you can set aside a place for us and give us funds and do good things so that our minds can settle down. Even if you see us, I am just giving a story, but when you tell us about the dates, I cannot even tell you anything.

Nobody has talked to us on anything to do with Eldoret. That farm is around 500 acres. The elders are very few but young men and children are many. Even the people who are there are there because they have taken the huts--- Those who helped the Nandi and welcomed

them can say that they are the ones who were assisting us, but they were not good to everyone.

There is one of the Nandis who volunteered and came to the group of the elders and said: “Do not sleep today, we know that our parents sent away the colonialists with money. It is not now that we are being treated. As we have stayed together, we have learnt together with your children. I have come to tell you these: They have been brought by lorries and they will still be brought. I am still appealing to you because I am going back to the group; the youth of Nandi, do not sleep. Just go to the border and you should be armed because they are coming.”

The elders told women and children to go to church. Our husbands went and slept at the border and the women were told not to sleep, instead they be ready with stones. The women were also devoted; they armed themselves with stones so that they could help their husbands. So, they just came at that time, and it was now throwing of stone. We could not understand as it was at night and they went back. Our husbands slept a bit. At around dawn, there was an---

My sister is married to his son and I think he is ours because he has also bought land at that particular place. He had come from Kitale. So he was in our midst and he was a bad person amongst that group. They spoke by phone, then my husband came to the house to sleep but the children and women were in the church because they feared going back home; others went back home to prepare breakfast for the children and they left their children sleeping in the church. At that time, the husbands had gone to sleep and that is when the people came. My husband was trying to wake up but he was still sleepy. That is when the war broke out. First of all, it was the youth; a group of few people, who fought. There were telephone calls which were being made and the police station was a bit far. They could not come because there were screams all over. Two lorries came and others were taken to the other side.

Our husbands now said that it was for each one of us to rescue his or her life. They were around 300 people who had been brought by lorries. So each one of us had to run away for our own safety. You could not even get time to carry the spear. They were cut, and you could be put into maize stalks and then set on fire.

I have been told that my time is over. I am just praying that you look for a place for us. It should be a very different place from the one where we came from because if you asked me to go back to that particular place, I will never forget those last screams. I have two places in mind. When the incidence of the church was over, none of my children died at the church. My son, daughter and I sought refugee elsewhere. We just met on the other side. On that particular night, we buried one of my sister’s daughters in the farm because they still told us that this is not Nyeri or Kiambu! Go back to your home in Kiambu! Those were the utterance at border of the Kiambaa Church. It was just a mix up of farms. Now they had gone to the other side and it was a little bit better because it was a mix up of people; Kisiis, Kikuyus *et cetera*.

When I buried my sister's daughter, I told them that there was none who did not witness what happened at the church. So, even if your head was being stepped on--- I dug a grave and buried them there and covered them and told them that nobody should go to the church. Even if you are stepped on the head, do not try to scream. My daughter will tell you the whole story because she is fourteen years old. They came and looted and burnt the house. I was just looking at them as I was in the farm. They looted the houses and took everything from it. They had also burnt down Kiambaa Church. Then they went back to the houses and burnt everything.

I am just appealing to you not to ask me to go back to Kiambaa. I am just pleading with you, where we are is good. When Museveni came to Eldoret, he is the one who told me to come here and he said: "Fifteen thousand people have entered Uganda." He said that he had also lived in Kenya as a refugee for six years and he was taken care of by our brothers and he was not taken as a refugee. He told us: "Welcome at Kabutete Town." When I heard him say "welcome", and that was after the burning of the church, I had just stayed in a trench where you could not be sure whether there were snakes inside or not. But when Museveni declared that, I just told my mother "bye, you know you have your place." I gave her Kshs1, 000 and I told her: "If we cannot meet, we will just meet in Heaven because we were going to board a vehicle. You can meet tribes where you do not belong to." The most amusing thing is that even the Nandis are people of God. Even in that vehicle, the conductor and the driver were Nandis. That is why I say, God in heaven---

Even The Hague that you are saying they should be taken there, I think they should be taken so that it can be a lesson to the Government and the other people. They can learn that and then to learn for the country, so that they can look at those people who were killed--- Let us say that the two cannot cover their blood. It is better if they are forgiven and then they become a lesson to the rest of Kenyans. I am saying that when you go back, remember us, look for an alternative place for us; remember schools and our children. People are saying that our children are confused, my children have told me "If you are going, we are not going back with you." I do not know what she has become; she saw a head speaking! And you tell her to go back---- There are neighbours who are elders and who were on the other side and we were facing each other. If you go back to Kenya, just remember us, but do not ask us to go back, and that it is now a new Kenya. Even if it will be a new Kenya with new things----

I am pleading before God and, may God bless you.

The Commission Secretary (Ms. Nyaundi): Thank you very much. We have come to the end of today's hearing at this time. Commissioners will wind up the whole session. I am very grateful in the manner we have had these hearings.

Thank you very much.

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): Commissioner Chawatama, I think you have some closing remarks to make.

Sorry, before I ask Commissioner Chawatama to speak, I would like to recognize the presence of Priscilla Michael, from AAHI. She has been very supportive to the Commission. I would like to ask her to stand so that we can recognize her presence.

(Ms. Priscilla Michael stood up in her place.)

Thank you very much.

Mnamfahamu? Nafikiri huwa anawasaidia na tunamshukuru sana kwa hayo.

Commissioner Chawatama: Thank you very much for coming this afternoon and sharing with us your very painful stories. I would like, just by the show of hands, to ask if there is somebody who went back to Kenya and then decided to come back to Uganda. If there is somebody in the room, just put up your hand.

That is alright. It is okay. Can we have some silence, please?

There is time and season for everything. I believe that for Kenya, we have definitely entered a time of truth, justice and reconciliation. I am not surprised that this has happened because God has not failed us. God gives opportunities to people and nations; not only to repent, but to make sure they do what is fair and just. Your speaking out has helped this process because our report will not be complete without the experiences that you have gone through. It is witness against many institutions in Kenya. I think of the police, the judiciary and many other institutions that should have helped you to avoid the situation that you have found yourselves in, being in a foreign country; when you have a country of your own. May God bless you and bless where you prospered. I am sorry to hear very painful experiences that you have gone through and the losses that you suffered.

My dear sister who spoke last; we did visit the graves and the sites of the church. When you enter that place, sadness engulfs you. It is like somebody has thrown a blanket of sadness on you. So, there has been no healing that has taken place. I hope that this process will help to a larger extent bring healing and national unity so that you can sing a different song from the songs that we heard earlier in the hall. Those were lamentations of the pain, misery and poverty.

I pray that soon you would sing a happy song, a song of celebration. I pray for the rebirth of the new Kenya with leaders who will be servants of the people; leaders whom the Lord will entrust to take care of the people of Kenya.

Thank you very much for sharing with us and I will not forget you. I have taken pictures and when I will look at the pictures, I will remember and pray for you. I will ask the Lord what He will do for you, my sisters, and He will answer my prayers because he is God and He is faithful.

I think there are two ladies who talked about health issues. We need to get your particulars. There are things that can be done in the short-term, but other things will take a little bit longer. But, surely, before Jesus comes, we need to see the restoration of you in your land; the land that you have said you love so much and miss so much.

Thank you.

The Presiding Chair (Commissioner Shava): Thank you, Commissioner Chawatama. It is always very difficult to speak, after my colleague here, because you speak so well and you also speak for me. So, I will not attempt to repeat or paraphrase you. I would just like to say that as the Kenyan Commissioner on this panel, who has had the privilege of interacting with you for the last few hours, I feel very many things. I feel sadness and admiration for you. I admire your courage and the fact that you have managed to continue living and that you have adapted to life in a foreign country. You have done this under extremely difficult conditions.

I have worked with refugees in this country and in other countries. As I had said earlier today, I never ever expected to work with people who are called Kenyan refugees. Because of my work with refugees, I understand very many things which have not been said in this room. I know a few things about how that life goes on and I would just like to encourage you that one is not a refugee forever.

The last speaker has just said that President Museveni of Uganda was a refugee here in Kenya. So, you can go far from being a refugee to being a president. It is difficult but you should not lose hope. I would also like to encourage you that because of the woeful, unspeakable and horrible things that happened in our country at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008, there are changes that are taking place.

In Kenya, we see them on television and in the newspapers because there are things that the Government has finally realized and, unless they are changed, the things that we are talking about will not come. So, even this Commission was formed because the Government realized that, if we keep covering up things that happened in our country, then what happened in 2007/2008 can only happen again. So, there have been changes in the police force and even the name is changing from "Police Force" to "Police Service." Two weeks ago, a policeman was shown on media beating an elderly woman who was sitting down on the ground with her hands raised up. I want to tell you that the next morning that policeman was sacked and the senior policeman came to the home of that woman and apologized on behalf of the police.

New judges and magistrates have been appointed. The interviews were shown on television. So, the people will not continue sitting on the bench. We, Kenyans, had the opportunity to listen on how they were answering questions. Right now, we have to object to any of the appointments of any of those people we have seen. In case you went somewhere and this was the person who was handling your case and he asked for a bribe, you can now say so in Kenya. So, you can actually report them and they will not get the job. So, there are things that are changing in Kenya. I hope that encourages you.

My sister spoke with so much pain and anger, which I understand. She said that: “Going back to Kenya is like putting your leg in boiling oil.” Yes, that is what happened to the people who are seated in this room. It is as if Kenya boiled in your own home. That was a different Kenya. Things have improved and, therefore, if the UNHCR gives you an opportunity to go and do what they called: “Come and see, go and tell.” In other words, you can send your representative to go to Kenya to talk to people there, and you look for yourself and see that things have changed. Then that can help you to make up your own mind without being forced by anybody. You will make up your mind as to how you want live in future.

Finally, I would like to thank you for coming here today because you are very busy people. You have to work very hard to ensure that you eat today and tomorrow. Some of you have given up your medical appointments to come and give us your views. Some of you are not looking after your children, which is what you would normally be doing at this time. We recognize that and we thank you for coming here today.

Tomorrow, we will be talking to young people and we want to assure you that we will take seriously everything you tell us. What you would recommend, we will pass it on. We will be having what we call institutional healings and indoor hearings. We will talk to the security agencies, including the police. We are going to tell them that women in Kiryandongo have said that unless they feel that their security is guaranteed--- In fact, not just by writing something and saying that the Government of Kenya guarantees your security, unless they feel assured that their security is guaranteed; they do not feel that they are able to live in their own country. I think they will pay attention to what you say. So, we will pass on the message. We will not hide anything that you have said. We will not exaggerate or change anything that you have said.

We thank you for talking to us so freely and frankly.

Asanteni sana, akina mama.

The Commissioner Secretary (Ms. Nyaundi): Thank you very much. I would like us to stand up for a final prayer. I would like the pastor to come and pray for us. As she comes, I take this opportunity to announce that there is a soda and you are welcome.

Thank you very much and may God bless you.

(The Commission adjourned with prayers at 4.00 p.m.)