

Africa: July/Aug '07

Author: [International Justice](#)

Preparations well underway for special report featuring views of Darfur victims on the conflict and the ICC.

At the moment, the Hague office is researching a special report called Darfur: Voices from the Ground, and we have spent a lot of time interviewing people in camps for those forced from their homes because of violence.

Speaking over very crackly telephone lines, their stories have been extremely moving and have provided the team with an insight into the conflict which cannot be gathered by speaking to experts from the international community.

In our reporting on Darfur, we normally rely on regional experts to give a sense of what's happening, but on this occasion we felt it important to get an impression of what life is like for those embroiled in the conflict, and canvass their views about the International Criminal Court and the United Nations.

Mobile phone networks are often down - some claim this is because the Khartoum government shuts them off prior to an attack on civilians - and batteries regularly die half way through interviews.

This has made the work frustrating, but it is more than made up for when we get poignant accounts of life in El Fashir and Nyala from people who were forced from their homes after everything they owned was destroyed.

Our partners at Radio Netherlands have also worked hard to interview as many Darfuris "on the ground" as possible, using their Arabic-speaking journalists to reach individuals who don't speak any English. Radio Netherlands broadcasts all over the world, and has a commitment to covering global issues. As such, they are important partners for IWPR in The Netherlands.

While it is of paramount importance to protect the identities of those who speak to us - because the authorities in Sudan are opposed to the ICC and do not like people talking openly about the court - we are keen to get the views of ordinary people reflected in this report.

Next month we will publish it, and host a round table discussion with key members of the ICC, human rights groups and victims from El Fashir. Radio Netherlands will co-host the event and record the discussion for broadcast across their global service.

This will give the ICC a chance to respond to what victims we contact are saying about the ICC and its work in Darfur, and provoke debate amongst participants about the role of international justice in a country reluctant to succumb to jurisdiction.

We have also written several features about Darfur which have been very widely republished, including a piece about a group of children in Darfur who drew pictures of their experience, and wanted them to be submitted as evidence before the ICC.

The team also looked at why the ICC is not prosecuting environmental crimes allegedly being committed by Khartoum - like burning fields and contaminating water sources - and wrote a piece about why world leaders seem not to be lobbying for justice in Darfur.

Another highlight this month has been the arrival of our intern from Uganda, Samuel Okiror Egadu. He impressed us during a journalism training session in Gulu, when IWPR joined forces with its sister enterprise the Uganda Radio Network to run workshops on how to report on the ICC, and related peace and justice issues.

After the training we worked to build up a network of stringers to write stories for us, providing on the spot analysis and insight into how the arrest warrants against the LRA leadership are received in Uganda; the ebb and flow of peace talks in Juba; and views on whether the ICC should step aside in favour of traditional justice rituals and amnesties.

We agreed to offer a unique experience to the most promising stringer - the opportunity to spend five weeks on a supervised internship in The Hague, from where it is easier to contact the ICC and get interviews about the court's policies in Uganda.

Samuel has now in The Hague for five weeks, speaking to key ICC players to lend fresh insight to his stories.

While getting used to the Dutch climate and cuisine has not always been to Samuel's pleasure, his reporting is flourishing, and, at the same time, he's educating the Hague team on the history of the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency in northern Uganda.

Location: [Africa](#)

Topic: [Project Highlight](#)

Focus: [ICC - International Criminal Court](#)

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