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Training sessions in Gulu and Kampala focusing on the ICC and court reporting.

For any journalist assigned the story, the insurgency in northern Uganda, dominated by Joseph Kony, the man responsible for orchestrating two decades of misery through his rebel Lord's Resistance Army, presents a challenge.

For journalists living in the north of Uganda, his brutal crimes have touched their own families, with some witnessing brothers and sisters being abducted, raped and killed before their eyes.

In May, IWPR worked alongside the Uganda Radio Network, URN, to run training sessions in Kampala and Gulu, aimed at seeking to understand the challenges facing local journalists, sharing experiences of reporting on atrocities; and discussing the mechanisms employed to try and stop the conflict.

Around 18 journalists were trained in Kampala and 30 in Gulu, and we focused on the International Criminal Court, which was invited into Uganda by President Museveni to investigate the LRA situation in December 2003, with arrest warrants issued for the five top LRA's leaders in 2005.

IWPR and URN trainers spent months preparing a 4-day schedule covering court reporting; new ICC innovations, such as the inclusion of victims into the legal process; how to conduct research; and how to unpick complex legal jargon.

Trainers traced the history of humanitarian law and prosecutions; the differences between the ICC and other ad hoc tribunals that have gone before it; and whether it is likely to bring lasting peace to the north of the country.

We contemplated the stalemate caused by the LRA leaders' rejection of the ICC, which has proved a divisive issue throughout the country, with Museveni turning his back on the court and entering into negotiations and offering an amnesty to the LRA in return for peace.

The LRA has vowed never to agree to a peace deal until ICC indictments are dropped, prompting some victims in the north to lobby for local justice solutions, arguing that peace is preferable to a remote form of justice that they cannot see and does not feel real.

In Kampala, we debated solutions for ending decades of LRA violence, which would be palatable for all parties.

Some journalists argued that the insurgency - and the entrenched north/south divide - has impacted economically and politically across Uganda, rendering local justice mechanisms insufficient.

Those northerners crammed into camps for the internally displaced, who have fled violent attacks by the LRA, are adamant that reconciliation is the only path towards sustainable peace, as opposed to the punitive justice of the ICC.

We looked at whether international law can work in concert with local justice mechanisms, and explored the impact of amnesties offered to African leaders in the past, and what impact these had on conflict and peace.

As in any conflict or post-conflict situation, it is important that reporting remains fair, accurate and balanced so as not to inflame tensions or misrepresent the true picture, especially when fragile peace talks are taking place between the government and LRA in Juba.

In the north, radio stations are playing a pivotal role in broadcasting messages to rebels in the bush, encouraging them to lay down their arms and return home to their families.

At other times, rebels have used radio to air their concerns to ICC investigators and Ugandan government negotiators, and journalists and presenters are aware of the high-profile role they are playing in this respect.

We discussed the new independent offices the ICC has set up to support defence teams and also those victims who apply for participation in the investigation and trial phases at the court.

Participants also debated the limitations of the ICC, not having its own police force to go out, find and arrest suspects, prompting some journalists to refer to it as "all bark, with no bite".

Then we contemplated the obligations of Uganda under the Rome Statute (which lays out how states which support the ICC should behave), in particular its responsibility to arrest LRA suspects.

This led us to question whether journalists should be writing about the impotence of the ICC, or reminding the Ugandan government of the duties it assumed when it ratified the Rome Statute, and asked for the ICC's help in 2003.

Ugandan legal experts, such as the former president of the Uganda Law Society, the coordinator of the Centre for Conflict Resolution, and Ugandan lawyers who had interned at the ICC, were invited to make presentations and were grilled in question and answer sessions.

The focus of the training sessions was translating the new knowledge acquired into concrete story ideas, either for broadcast in newspapers such as the New Vision or Daily Monitor, or as a basis for TV chat shows and radio phone-ins.

The involvement of the ICC has arguably led to an increase in coverage of the northern insurgency in the world press, and local journalists' insights, and unique access to victims and local leaders, provides vital background and context for journalists around the globe.

Whilst ostensibly enjoying press freedom, many of the journalists IWPR and URN trained expressed fear at becoming victims of Uganda's anti-terrorism laws if government officials interpret their work as supporting the rebels, or being too critical of government policy.

Nonetheless, the trainees left the sessions with notebooks full of story ideas, and pledged to feed what they'd learnt into more balanced and thorough analysis of conflict resolution, peace talks and justice.

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Topic: Project Highlight

Focus: ICC - International Criminal Court

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