

## **International Justice/ICC: March - August 2008**

**Author:** [IWPR](#)

International Justice/ICC Project Review: March - August '08

IWPR fraud probe prompts demonstration

“Demonstrators felt the reports published on IWPR website on rebuilding the war-ravaged region of northern Uganda were factual and accurate,” said Lira district information officer Joe Erem Oyie. In early August, an IWPR special investigation into suspected corruption relating to a long-running reconstruction project in war-torn northern Uganda sparked a demonstration in the town of Lira.



On August 23, over 200 people came together to protest the alleged misappropriation of money from the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, NUSAF – a government agency responsible for managing projects to rebuild the north.

The fraud allegations, which had already prompted a criminal investigation, were the subject of the IWPR story, *Northern Aid Programme Probed*, written by Bill Oketch and Patrick Okino in Lira, and published on August 13. The project has since published two follow-up stories.



Demonstrators called for Lira district chairman Franco Ojur to be sacked. Police suspect the official of involvement in one of the cases under investigation. He denies the allegations.

Lira district information officer Joe Erem Oyie said demonstrators acted after hearing about IWPR's stories.

“Demonstrators felt the reports published on IWPR website on rebuilding the war-ravaged region of northern Uganda were factual and accurate,” said Oyie.

Okino said Lira resident district commissioner Joan Pacoto told him that the IWPR corruption stories had helped in the fraud investigation.



NUSAF distributed mainly World Bank money to pay for the redevelopment of the north of the country following a 20-year civil war between Kampala and the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army, LRA.

Hundreds of local community projects requested support, and selected their own local project leaders.

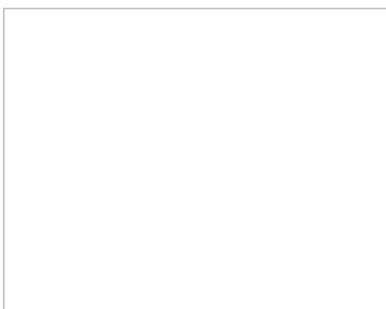
Some 24 suspects have been arrested in Lira, including Ojur, and others in Gulu.

The World Bank sent a copy of IWPR’s first report on the fraud allegations to investigators of the Inspector General of Government, IGG – a government agency tasked with eliminating corruption and abuse of office. IGG officials immediately launched an inquiry based on the article.

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Corruption reports result of IWPR training



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series of stories on the alleged corruption sabotaging the redevelopment of the north were produced by journalists who had just attended an IWPR investigative reporting seminar in Uganda.

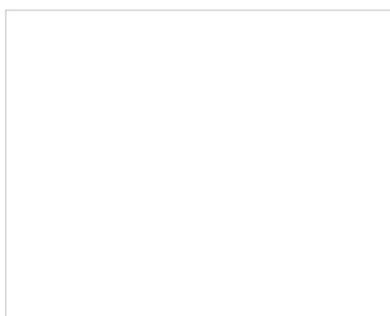
From June 9 to 13, IWPR Africa editor Peter Eichstaedt held workshops in investigative reporting techniques in Lira and Gulu.

These sessions – which covered the topics of health, education, agriculture and the economy – were held to prepare journalists to produce investigative reports on the reconstruction of northern Uganda.

At an investigative reporting seminar in Uganda, IWPR Africa editor Peter Eichstaedt gave reporters the tools they need to produce sound investigative pieces. The reporters were given the tools they need to produce sound investigative pieces.

“When you are handling a story, your story should not be one-sided,” Eichstaedt told them. “Talk to many sources, including the accused. Don’t put your own opinion into a story. Separate facts from opinion, write facts and verify information.”

Eichstaedt also told journalists to back up stories with statistics and interview experts, government officials and NGOs to find out what is being done to address specific problems.



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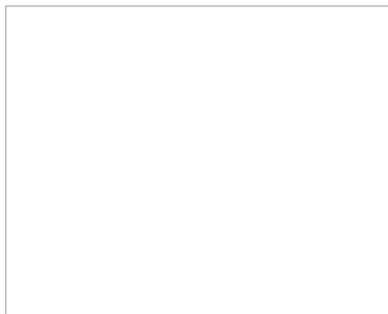
well as the corruption series, the training resulted in a comprehensive set of reports, published in August, which dealt with topics ranging from AIDS and education to the psychological trauma caused by war.

The following month, Oketch, who took part in the training, was commended by BBC World Service Trust with a communicating transitional justice in Africa award for two stories he wrote for IWPR this year. The stories were Corruption Blights Rebuilding Efforts, published on May 29, and Food Crisis Hits North from June 4.

## International Justice/ICC Project Review: March - August '08

Project covers reaction to request for al-Bashir indictment

In July, IWPR Hague-based staff worked with trainees in Khartoum to give local reaction to the ICC prosecution request to issue an arrest warrant against Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir.



ICC

chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo asked judges at the court to issue a warrant against al-Bashir for allegedly committing genocide and for crimes against humanity.

This followed months of speculation, which began after he told the United Nations Security Council that Sudan's entire state apparatus was being used to destroy Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit communities.

The trainees on the ground revealed that the government was organising rallies in response to the likely arrest warrant, with members of al-Bashir's ruling National Congress Party coming out to join the demonstrations.

They added that the practice of censoring independent newspapers had also been tightened since the prosecutor's announcement.

IWPR trainees in Khartoum revealed that authorities there sought to engineer protests against likely ICC indictment of the Sudanese president. IWPR journalists also called contacts living in camps for displaced persons near Al-Fashir and Nyala for their reaction. Although they welcomed the prosecutor's announcement, they told IWPR the situation on the ground could get worse if the UN peacekeeping force in war-torn Darfur remained powerless to fully protect internally displaced civilians.

They pointed out that while indictments are being considered at the ICC in The Hague, violence continues each day in

the region.

The team also spoke to UNAMID representatives in the region to confirm accounts that non-essential UN staff were being withdrawn for fear of retributive attacks against peacekeepers.

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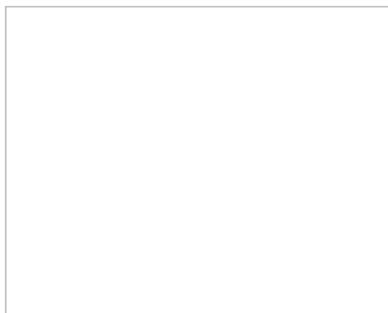
International Justice/ICC Project Review: March - August '08

IWPR to produce new international justice radio show for DRC

“It is very important to give out correct information to establish the impartiality of the ICC in the eyes of the Congolese, because it is not evident that it has that credibility,” said Lena Slachmuis, director of Search for Common Ground in the DRC. In June, the ICC project announced plans to produce a fortnightly radio show - **Facing Justice** - to be broadcast across DRC.

The 15-minute programme - a joint production with the NGO Search for Common Ground - will be broadcast in Lingala, Swahili and French twice a week throughout the country.

Clips of the show will also be placed on the IWPR website to increase people's access to the material.



The team thought up the show after they went to Uganda, Sudan and the DRC to network with journalists and editors. Visiting these countries confirmed that radio was a highly effective medium for disseminating information.

Facing Justice will contain contributions from Hague-based staff, IWPR-trained journalists in DRC, legal experts, political analysts, human rights activists and government representatives. Search for Common Ground staff, meanwhile, plan to monitor listeners and establish focus groups to gauge the show's impact in the country.

The launch of the show was planned to coincide with the start of the trial of Congolese war crimes suspect Thomas Lubanga on June 23. However, the case against Lubanga is now uncertain after judges ruled on June 13 that prosecutors had abused the rules of collecting evidence, making a fair trial impossible.



Lena

Slachmuis, director of Search for Common Ground in the DRC, said the programme is important because information on ICC proceedings is limited in the country.

“It is very important to give out correct information to establish the impartiality of the ICC in the eyes of the Congolese, because it is not evident that it has that credibility,” she said.

“The collaboration with IWPR will help us bring out credible voices from the ICC to give information to the people in a regular way, so they can understand what is happening with the trial, and what the constraints and opportunities are with international justice,” she said.

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Project trip to Khartoum

Head of the National Press Council Professor Ali Shumo said IWPR's training could help improve journalistic practices in the country. In early June, ICC staff Lisa Clifford and Katy Glassborow travelled to Khartoum as part of a needs-assessment exercise, in advance of a training programme tentatively scheduled for this November.



During their week-long trip, the journalists met a number of media workers and NGO representatives, who told them that they were keen to learn new technical skills.

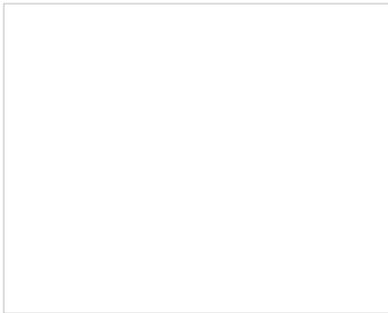
“We have different values in the Islamic world, but want to learn how to be accurate and fair and use new technologies,” said Dr Muheddin Titawi, chairman of the Journalists Union.

“Journalism needs to go back to fundamentals, putting aside affiliations,”



said a Sudanese NGO worker. Professor Ali Shumo, who heads the National Press Council, which sponsored the visit, said IWPR’s training could help counter the widespread practice among journalists of copying and pasting material from the Internet.

While the editor of a Khartoum-based newspaper said that training currently available is limited in scope, “It is too theoretical. We lack the practical, professional way of handling the job, and the ethical concepts of journalism.”



A

Sudanese NGO worker said that journalists need to learn how to be more balanced in their reporting.

“Journalism needs to go back to fundamentals, putting aside affiliations,” he said.

IWPR Hague staff are also using the information gathered during the trip to start compiling an Arabic-language training manual. This will focus on basic journalism skills to be presented at a training event being planned for later this year.

## Training in DRC

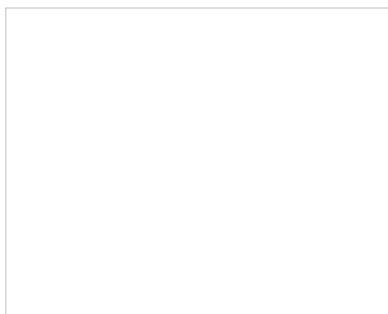
“Until IWPR brought its expertise on the ICC and international justice to these Bunia journalists, they had never been provided with an in-depth explanation of the origins of the court, and why and how it functions,” said IWPR Africa editor Peter Eichstaedt. In June, Eichstaedt also conducted training in eastern DRC. The session on international justice and the ICC was held for eight radio and print reporters in the Ituri town of Bunia.

Trainees came from Bunia and surrounding towns to participate in the course, which was scheduled to coincide with the start of Lubanga’s trial at the ICC, as well as a confirmation of charges hearing in the case of militia leaders Germain Katanga and Matthieu Ndjugolo.

Richard Pituwa, the director of radio station Canal Revelation in Bunia, helped organise the session, which was interpreted by IWPR trainee Jacques Kahorha.

Eichstaedt said the session gave trainees the information they need to report on the international court.

“Until IWPR brought its expertise on the ICC and international justice to these Bunia journalists, they had never been provided with an in-depth explanation of the origins of the court, and why and how it functions,” he said.



“Such knowledge is vital to the ability to report accurately on the court and its proceedings in the coming months and years as indictees come to trial.”

During his DRC trip, Eichstaedt also accompanied Kahorha on various reporting assignments, including one to the village of Bogoro, about 25 km from Bunia, which was the scene of a massacre for which Katanga has been charged by the ICC.

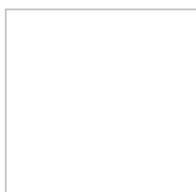
In Goma, Kahorha and Eichstaedt conducted numerous interviews with victims of sexual violence as well as key players in the NGO and civil society sectors. These interviews became part of special reports prepared by IWPR on sexual violence in the DRC, published in October.

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Hague team joined by Ugandan intern

“[The IWPR] internship has given me courage, and now I will be able to interview [high-ranking] officials in future,” said Ugandan intern Caroline Ayugi. In May, regular IWPR contributor Caroline Ayugi from Gulu in Uganda flew over to The Hague to work as an intern in the IWPR office.



Ayugi

worked alongside Eichstaedt, Clifford and Glassborow, who offered her help with stories. During her time in The Hague, Ayugi met a number of high profile officials such as Beatrice Le Fraper du Hellen, a top adviser to the ICC chief prosecutor.

“I had never talked face-to-face with people at that level before. Back home, we quoted such high-ranking people from a distance, and only when they made speeches or delivered statements,” she said

“But this internship has given me courage, and now I will be able to interview such officials in future.”

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Coverage of Bemba arrest

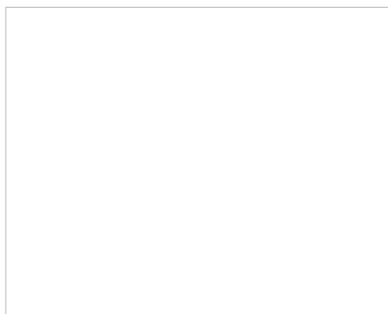
The ICC project's coverage of the arrest of DRC's former vice-president and opposition leader Jean-Pierre Bemba on war crimes charges was widely republished and circulated among victims groups in the country.

"The information that you send us is of great importance," said Justine Masika, coordinator of Synergie, a group that helps women who have been raped. Some said Bemba's arrest in Belgium in May was an important step in the fight against impunity, while others said the court was siding with Congo's president Joseph Kabila by wiping out the political opposition.

Bemba, who had been living in Brussels, has been indicted by the ICC for crimes committed in the Central African Republic, CAR, which neighbours DRC.

The opposition leader's Movement for the Liberation of Congo, MLC, was an armed group in the 2002 to 2003 conflict in CAR, before later becoming a political party in DRC. Bemba came second in the 2006 DRC presidential election, which Kabila won in a run-off.

According to ICC prosecutors, Bemba's forces terrorised innocent civilians and carried out a campaign of rape and looting in CAR.



The IWPR story Bemba Arrest Sets Key Precedent, from May 28, was widely republished, including in Kinshasa daily Le Phare.

"The opinions of all the players were included [in the piece]," said the newspaper's international justice reporter Desire-Israel Kazadi.

In Goma - where sexual violence crimes are rife - the head of a group that helps women who have been raped said she shared IWPR articles with other members of her coalition, as well as victims.

"The information that you send us is of great importance," said Justine Masika, coordinator of Synergie, a group that helps women who have been raped.

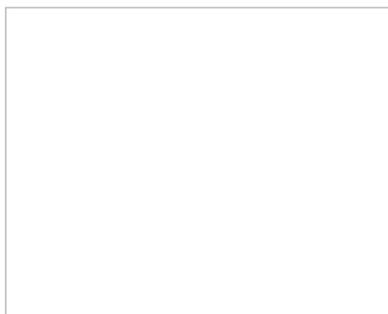
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Coverage of LRA activity

“IWPR's reporting on the Juba [peace] talks...has provided valuable information that has contributed to shaping our thinking on the negotiations,” said Elise Keppler, of Human Rights Watch's International Justice Programme. During the last six months, the ICC project has followed the movements of the LRA, which is currently based in the Garamba national park in DRC, from where the rebels were taking part in the now moribund peace process.

In April, Human Rights Watch, HRW, said that IWPR reporting had helped focus attention on LRA reinforcement which took place as it was meant to be preparing to disarm under the peace agreement it was negotiating with Kampala.

The IWPR story *LRA Prepares for War, not Peace* described LRA abductions of civilians – many of them children – in DRC, South Sudan and CAR, in an apparent bid to build up its military capacity.



Following publication of the story on April 27, a number of international organisations took note, including HRW, and Amnesty International in London.

“IWPR's reporting on recent reports of LRA atrocities in the Central African Republic, Southern Sudan, and DRC helped focus attention on this important issue,” said Elise Keppler, of HRW's International Justice Programme.

IWPR's reporting on the Juba [peace] talks, more generally, has provided valuable information that has contributed to

shaping our thinking on the negotiations.”

Elizabeth Evenson, also with HRW, said the IWPR story provided more detail and depth than other reports.

“There have been some newswire reports but... in terms of comprehensive pieces, there has been nothing comparable to [IWPR’s] article in the international press,” said Elizabeth Evenson of HRW. “There have been some newswire reports but... in terms of comprehensive pieces, there has been nothing comparable to your article in the international press,” she said.

“There is still international action that can be taken to stop abuses by the LRA – as reported by you – and help execute arrest warrants against them. For all of us collectively, it is important that these actions be put on the radar screen of the international community so that they understand what work is required here, and that the story isn’t over in Uganda.

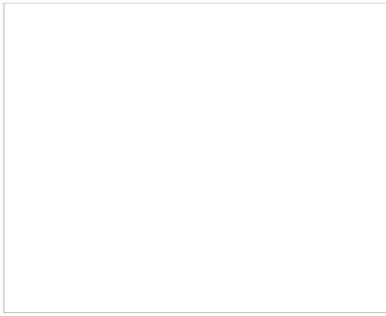
“It is essential that journalism play a role in communicating what is happening in The Hague, which can seem so remote for the people for whom the court has been established.”

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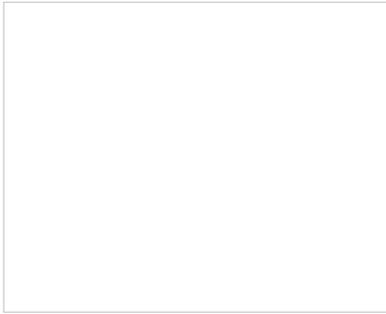
IWPR Launches Dutch charity

According to Justice Julia Sebutinde, a judge in the trial of Charles Taylor at the Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone, IWPR’s output is very important. In March, staff in the Hague office celebrated becoming a registered Dutch charity – Stichting IWPR-Nederland – at a ceremony attended by journalists, diplomats, legal experts and jurists from international tribunals, including the ICC.



“The Hague is the international city of peace and justice, so it is fitting that IWPR-Nederland is established here to strengthen the Institute’s long-standing commitment to international justice reporting,” said Frans Kok, secretary of the board of IWPR-Nederland, and former political editor of Holland’s leading daily newspaper, NRC Handelsblad, at the ceremony.

IWPR has reported on trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY, since the court was established in the 1990s.



“The Hague is committed to international justice, and we are proud to have IWPR in our city,” said Hague mayor Jozias van Aartsen, a former minister of foreign affairs, at the gathering.

Justice Julia Sebutinde, a judge in the trial of Charles Taylor at the Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone, which is taking place at the ICC, said IWPR’s output was very important.

“Journalists have a vital role in communicating the detailed proceedings of international courts of justice to people in the countries affected,” she said, “especially in cases where international courts are convened away from the conflict area. In this regard, I am very impressed by the work of IWPR.”

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Selected articles

**Comments**

**Amnesty**  
**May Not Quell Violence**

By Eugène Bakama Bope in Brussels (AR No. 182, 12-Aug-08)

**Fair**  
**Trial vs Confidentiality**

By Eugene Bakama Bope in Brussels (AR No. 181, 08-Aug-08)

**Northern**  
**Ugandans Deserve a Break**

By Bill Oketch in Lira (16-Jul-08)

**Can**  
**Excess of Justice Lead to Injustice?**

By Lisa Clifford in The Hague (26-Jun-08)

**Bemba**  
**is ICC's Biggest Fish**

By Eugène Bakama Bope in Brussels (AR No. 175, 18-Jun-08)

**Justice**  
**Squandered**

By Eugène Bakama Bope in Brussels (AR No. 174, 10-Jun-08)

**The**  
**Kony Problem**

By Peter Eichstaedt (2-Jun-08)

**Sudan's**  
**Wake-Up Call**

By Peter Eichstaedt in The Hague (12-May-08)

**Curtains**  
**for Kony**

By Peter Eichstaedt (14-Apr-08)

**Countering**  
**the FDLR**

By Eugène Bakama Bope (AR No. 165, 08-Apr-08)

**Uganda:**  
**Real Peace or Empty Gesture?**

By Peter Eichstaedt, IWPR Africa Editor (4-Apr-08)

**Special Reports**

**Education**  
**in Crisis in Uganda's North**

By Patrick Okino and Bill Oketch in northern Uganda Lira (AR No. 184, 01-Sep-08)

**Northern**  
**Ugandans Bear Mental Scars**

By Caroline Ayugi in Gulu and Bill Oketch in Lira (AR No. 184, 27-Aug-08)

**Corruption**  
**Probe Leads to Further Arrests**

By Patrick Okino in Lira (AR No. 184, 27-Aug-08)

**New**  
**Corruption Claims Investigated**

By Patrick Okino in Lira (AR No. 183, 21-Aug-08)

**Returnees**  
**Reviving Local Economy**

By Patrick Okino in Dokolo (AR No. 183, 19-Aug-08)

**Doubts**  
**Over Recovery Plan**

By Patrick Okino in Lira (AR No. 182, 12-Aug-08)

**Northern**  
**Aid Programme Probed**

By Bill Oketch and Patrick Okino in Lira (AR No. 182, 13-Aug-08)

**LRA**  
**Prepares for War, not Peace**

By Katy Glassborow and Peter Eichstaedt in The Hague, with Emma Mutaizibwa in Kampala (AR No. 168, 24-Apr-08)

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