

**INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR**

WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION:

Last Name: Pyerina Gender: Female

First Name(s): AYAA Father's Name: Stanlao ORYEM

Other Names Used: / Mother's Name: Rosalia ADONG

Children: seven children (two deceased and one was abducted)

Place of Residence: LALIYA-DWOL village (near Pope John Paul II Secondary School), PARDEGE Division, GULU municipality

Date of Birth/Age: I don't know. I think 60

Place of Birth: PATALIRA NEN KITYENA
village, PATIKO sub-county, ASWA county,
GULU district

Ethnic Origin: Acholi

Religion: Catholic

Language(s) Spoken: Acholi

Language(s) Written: can only write her name; can count

Language(s) Used in Interview: Acholi, English

Current Occupation: With the injury on my leg I cannot work

Former Occupation(s): Peasant farmer

Place of Interview: GULU town

Date(s) and Time of Interview: 25 and 26 February 2005

Interviewer(s): **John** and Olivia STRUYVEN Interpreter:

Names of all persons present during interview: AYAA Pyerina, [REDACTED] Olivia STRUYVEN and [REDACTED]

Signature(s): Aya Pirina

Struyve



Witness statement of AYAA Pyerina

WITNESS STATEMENT:

Procedure

1. I was informed and explained, in a way I was able to understand, what the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) are and what are their mandates, powers and authority.
2. I was informed on who the persons that were going to be present during the interview were and what was their position in the OTP and in the proceedings.
3. I was informed that this interview is voluntary. It is from my free will that I am present in this place and that I am willingly giving my statement.
4. I was informed that I might be called to testify before the Court and that, if called as a witness, my identity may have to be disclosed to the Court, the accused and to the defence counsel of the accused.
5. I was informed of the procedures available to the Court for ensuring the protection of confidential information provided to the Court, as well as for my own protection and security.
6. I was informed of the existence of the Victims' Participation and Reparation Unit and its function and told that individuals who qualify as victims, in the judgment of the judges, will be entitled to participate in future court proceeding and potentially to receive reparations.
7. I was given the opportunity to ask what would be the procedures of the present interview. I was told that at the conclusion of the interview, I would be asked to sign a written statement after having had an opportunity to review it and add any corrections or additional information.

Personal History

8. I was born and brought up in PATALIRA NEN KITYENA village. I stayed there until I got married at the age of 15 with Valentino OLANYA. We lived together on the other side of the stream in PARANGA village, ASWA County, GULU District. I gave birth to all my seven children in PARANGA village:

- ODONGPINY Geofrey (male, now around 25 years old, he joined the army and lives now in the barracks of COOPEE camp);
- OMONY Charles (male, abducted in 1997 at the age of around 12);
- AKELLO Agnes (female, around 18 years old, she lives with her husband in LALIYA-DWOL village);
- ADONG Florence (female, around 14 years, she lives with me in LALIYA-DWOL village and goes to school in GULU town);

A . P




2

UGA.00069.019



Witness statement of AYAA Pyerina

- OOLA Justine (male, 12 years old, he lives with the brother of his father in KASUBI village. He goes to school in GULU Public Primary School);
- ANEK Milly (female, 8 years old, she died during the May 2004 incident); and
- KOMAKECII (male, without a first name, died at the age of 3, prior to the incident).

9. In 1996, we moved away from PARANGA village and went to GULU town. MUSEVENI had come into power and the insurrections had started. 1997, my husband died in GULU town.

10. After around 2 years, we moved from GULU town back to PARANGA village.

11. Around 3 years later, I moved from PARANGA village to AJULU camp. Rebels were abducting people, and the soldiers told us that the government had implemented a directive that people had to move within 24 days to a camp. So we followed the directive and I moved with all my children to AJULU camp. This camp is in the same sub-county as PARANGA village, about 3.5 miles away, so that is why I decided to move to that camp. We stayed in AJULU camp for about 3.5 years.

12. Some of my children were attending schools in GULU town, which was too far away from AJULU camp so in 2003 I decided to build a house in LUKODI camp and moved there with my youngest child Milly. Florence was at that time living with her brother Justine in LALIYA-DWOL village. In the weekend Florence often visited me in the camp when she was collecting firewood and food.

Location and description of the house in LUKODI camp

13. At the time I arrived in the camp, the area had not yet been divided into zones, but my house was near the road from GULU to AJULU. It was on the same side of the road as the school and the barracks – on the side where the sun rises. Only few houses are on the other side of the road, mainly houses that had been there before the camp was established. The soldiers asked the owners of these houses to move to the other side of the road, so that all the houses would be on the same side. The trading center is on the other side of the road. The barracks and the trading center are more into the direction of GULU and my house was more into the direction of AJULU.

14. My house was around 12 feet diameter. In the middle of the house there was a pillar supporting the roof.

15. The house was around 300 meters away from the barracks. The doorframe of my house was made of palm-tree and the shutter was made out of iron sheets. The door, that was old, had a round hole of around 10 cm. diameter in the iron sheet. The door was facing the barracks.

16. Next to my house you had on one side a latrine, surrounded by one meter high grass. The latrine was around 4 meters from my house, in the direction of the barracks. On the other side, about 3 meters further, you had a kraal, where animals would stay during the

A P

8 [REDACTED]

3

UGA.00069.020



Witness statement of AYAA Pyerina

night. The grass on that side was much shorter because the animals, mainly cows, would eat the grass.

May 2004 attack

17. On 20 May 2004, around 1800 hrs. I was preparing a meal. On normal days, I would have the meal around 1400 hrs. – 1500 hrs. but that day I had picked up food from PARANGA village, so I prepared the food later than usual.

18. I know it was around 1800 hrs. because that was the time that the soldiers would usually return to the barracks, and they had just returned. I was inside my house with Florence and Milly. At that time, I heard the rebels blowing the whistles and then making ‘the alarm’: I mean thereby shouting ‘uuuuu’ while putting one hand on and off the mouth. I also heard camp residents shouting ‘lakwena, lakwena’. I stayed inside my house, but could see through the hole in my door that camp residents were running around.

19. Shortly afterwards, the whistling and the alarm had stopped, and I heard gunshots instead coming from both the barracks and from the direction where the sun rises.

20. It seemed to me that the rebels –located in the direction where the sun rises- and the soldiers –located in the barracks- were shooting at each other. I heard gunshots from one side, being responded by gunshots from the other side. In general, though, the gunshots mainly came from the side of the barracks.

21. Around 1900 hrs. – 1930 hrs., the gunshots coming from the direction of the barracks stopped and I heard only gunshots from the direction where the sun rises. After the incident, I was told that around 1930 hrs. the soldiers had run away towards the direction where the sun sets.

22. The whole period between 1800 hrs. and 1930 hrs., I stayed inside my house with the door closed. Florence and Milly were with me. Florence, who does not live with me in the camp had come that Saturday to collect firewood close to the camp. I didn’t run away because they were shooting outside and I was afraid of being hit.

23. Around 1930 hrs. – 2000 hrs, I saw –through the hole in my door- five rebels coming from the house next door straight into the direction of my house. They were shouting that everyone should come outside of their houses. All five were bare-chested adult men, and they had tied their shirts around their waists. Two of them had military trousers in camouflage color and dreadlocks. The other three had civilian trousers and short hair. I could not distinguish one of them giving orders to the others.

24. I could see that all five of them had similar guns, the size of an under-arm. They were holding their guns in one hand. I did not see them carrying whistles.

25. At that point, I was standing close to the pillar of my house, in the center. Milly was standing next to me, on my right, and next to her was Florence. From where I was standing I could see through the hole in the door. When they shouted that everyone had to

A P
8



Witness statement of AYAA Pyerina

come outside, I started moving towards the door to open it, shouting: 'I am coming to open the door'.

26. Before I reached the door, one of the rebels opened the door, carried the frame of the door together with the door and threw the door away.

27. From outside, standing at the door, all the five rebels started shooting into my house. I believe they may have tried to only hit the ground. They shot into my direction and the direction of my two children, and at everything else in the house. The blankets and other property in my house were destroyed by the bullets. I heard separate shots, not rapid shots (i.e. shots that automatically and very fast follow each other up).

28. I wanted to move my leg, but I could not move it, so I fell down. That is when I realized that I was shot in my left leg. Milly fell on me and I saw that a bullet had hit her tummy. The bullet had entered from one side (a small hole – around 1 cm. diameter) and had come out from the other side (a much bigger hole – around 5 cm. diameter). I realized she was dead. Florence was also shot at the two big toes of her left foot.

29. The five rebels then entered the house. I was lamenting: 'You are all Acholi children. Why do you do this to us? You have shot and killed my child'. They told me that they wanted cooking oil. We had just received cooking oil from Caritas. I gave them the cooking oil and they walked out. I never see them afterwards.

Hiding at the latrine

30. I went outside my house and saw the barracks burning. I thought that the rebels would come and burn my house, too. I told Florence: 'You can still run: so run away! I cannot run because your sister is dead'. Florence ran away to the direction where the sun sets. I started crawling outside of the house. While I moved, I pulled Milly along with me. I crawled into the direction of the latrine. I could not walk further and I decided to hide at the latrine because the grass is high around there, whereas the grass around the kraal is short (eaten by the cows). I put Milly down next to the latrine and I laid down myself.

31. A bit later, it could have been around 20 minutes, I heard rebels in my house: they were removing things from my house. I realized later that they had taken beans, the trousers of my oldest son, a T-shirt, my head scarf, and the table cloth. Later, when I was in COOPEE, the soldiers gave me a bag with the things that they had found in my house, and those items were missing.

32. While at the latrine, I also heard two rebels in my house talking to each other in Acholi, one asking the other: 'What have you found in the pot?' The other answered: 'Beans'. The first one replied: 'Scoop it quickly so that we go away'.

33. Shortly afterwards, I heard a helicopter. Later, in the hospital, I was told that it was a helicopter from the government and that the commander of the soldiers had said that the helicopter should not shoot because there were several civilians hiding in the bush. I know that rebels do not have helicopters.

A P
J



Witness statement of AYAA Pyerina

34. During the whole time I was laying down next to the latrine, I saw the light of burning houses on the side where the sun rises and at the location where the barracks were. I could see that my house was not burned. My knee was painful and bleeding.

35. While the helicopter was still around, I heard a mamba, but I did not see it. I heard that the mamba was going towards the direction of UNYAMA River. I heard that it stopped at some point and then I could hear it coming back towards the direction of the camp.

36. After around 30 minutes, I also heard that a vehicle came and stopped on the road. Later, when the soldiers took me to the road, I realized that the vehicle was a lorry. It was a typical military lorry that normally carries soldiers.

37. I had heard that the vehicle stopped and that the soldiers had come outside. I then heard people speaking Acholi and Swahili on the road. I heard them saying in Acholi: 'The soldiers of LUKODI have all run away. It is better to come back tomorrow morning and look for them then'. I realized that these were not the rebels because I had heard the helicopter, the mamba and a vehicle, and rebels do not have these means of transportation.

Rescue

38. My house was near the road and I shouted 'Help me, I am shot, I am a civilian and I am here'. It took a while before they heard me. I was still at the latrine. A group of around 10 soldiers found me. They first carried my child to the vehicle (that I later realized was a lorry) and then they came back to carry me. When they had found me, I asked the soldiers to get a blanket from my house to cover the corpse of my child.

39. When we arrived at the lorry, the soldiers told me: "Woman, we can not take this child with us". As they explained, the government does not allow that. So they took my child to the mango tree near the main road on the side where the sun rises. I was told later that my child was brought the next day to LALIYA-DWOL and buried there.

40. We waited for a while in the vehicle for the other soldiers to arrive. We were still on the road inside the camp. After a while, the other soldiers arrived and we left for COOPEE camp. I was in the lorry with around 20 soldiers and one other civilian: a small girl of whom the mother had run away. We arrived around 2200 hrs. in COOPEE camp after having driven around for a while. On my way to COOPEE camp, from the vehicle, I saw the houses burning in LUKODI camp.

41. I spend the night in the barracks of COOPEE camp. There were also two soldiers wounded during the incident who were in the barracks. I slept in one of the houses of the barracks. The soldiers gave me two Paracetamol. The next morning, at around 0600 hrs. the soldiers went back in the lorry to LUKODI camp, and picked up more injured people from there. The soldiers told us that the lorry had left again for LUKODI.

A P

J

UGA-OTP-0283-0098



Witness statement of AYAA Pyerina

42. The vehicle came back around 1200 hrs. the same day with more injured people: there were two men, three women and four children (all girls), including my daughter Florence.

43. The names of the two men were NYEKO and OCII. NYEKO was shot in his shoulder. OCII was shot in the lower part of his back, the bullet came out higher up his back, close to his shoulder.

44. The injured women were AOL, Min OJOKO (literally: 'the mother of OJOKO'), and ATIM. AOL was cut at the back of her head and she was shot at her under-back. The bullet had come at the front of her waist. She later died in the hospital. Min OJOKO was shot in the thigh, and the bullet had gone from one side to the other. She also later died in the hospital. ATIM was beaten all over her body.

45. One of the girls was shot in the chest. Another one was hit in the thigh. The leg of the third girl was burned. My daughter was shot and hit at the two bigger toes of her left foot.

46. My daughter explained to me in the vehicle that Milly had been found earlier that morning under the mango tree and that the son of my sister and his sister-in-law had carried her to LALIYA-DWOL to be buried. Florence said that she had slept during the night outside of the camp, near LUKOME River. When she had come back from the bush, the body of Milly had already been removed. She did not tell me anything else about what had happened. She only said that, in the morning, she had seen the vehicle that brought her to COOPEE camp.

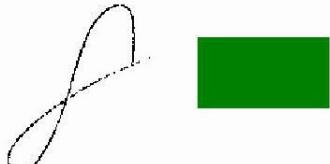
47. I joined the group of injured people in the vehicle. We were brought to GULU Main (Referral) Hospital. The two injured soldiers who had spent the night with me in COOPEE camp were carried in another vehicle and brought to the military hospital.

48. That same day, no other injured people from LUKODI camp were brought to the GULU Main Hospital. The next day, one woman, whose legs were stubbed was brought to the hospital. She used to cook in one of the hotels of LUKODI, but I do not remember her name. She survived.

49. I was the last one of all the patients injured in LUKODI camp being dismissed from the hospital. Florence was discharged after one month. They trimmed her toes. It healed well and she is now in school in LALIYA-DWOL. After she was discharged, she stayed with me in the hospital to take care of me. Most of the other people who were with me in the hospital went afterwards to COOPEE camp. Some of them may be in LUKODI camp, but I am not sure. As far as I know nobody else left the two camps to live elsewhere, like me.

50. Many people died in the incident. I do not know any of them by name, and I do not know how many died. I was later told that some people disappeared after the incident, and that they were killed. Amongst them were ONEK, an old man; OLANYA MUGWANY (I am not sure which one is the last name); ORYEM; OKUMU; and a girl whose name I do not remember.

A P



7

UGA.00069.024



Witness statement of AYAA Pyerina

51. I remember that, one day, white people accompanied by the Protestant Bishop ONONO (from the Northern Uganda Diocese) came to the hospital to take pictures. It was shortly after we had been brought to the hospital. They did not talk to us, they just took pictures. The doctor told me that they had come from America. After some time, some other white people came to the hospital and took pictures again. At that time, I was the only patient left in the hospital who was injured during the LUKODI incident. I do not remember that a team from Kampala, consisting of policemen and doctors, visited us in the hospital.

52. After being discharged from the hospital, I went to live in LALIYA-DWOL village, because my father-in-law owned a piece of land there and my mother-in-law is living there. Today, I still live there with my mother-in-law and my daughter Florence.

Closing Procedure

53. I have nothing to add to the above statement nor do I have anything to clarify.

54. I have given the answers to the questions of my own free will.

55. There has been no threat, promise or inducement which has influenced my answers.

56. I have no complaints about the way I was treated during this interview.

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

1. This Statement has been read over to me in the Acholi language and is true to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this Statement voluntarily and I am aware that it may be used in legal proceedings before the International Criminal Court and that I may be called to give evidence in public before the International Criminal Court.

Signed: Aya pyerina

Dated: 2.6.2.2005



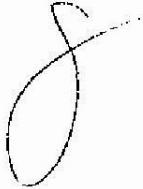
INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

I, Interpreter, certify that:

1. I am duly qualified to interpret from the Acholi language into the English language and from the English language into the Acholi language.
2. I have been informed by AYAA Pyerina that she speaks and understands the Acholi language.
3. I have orally translated the above statement from the English language to the Acholi language in the presence of AYAA Pyerina who appeared to have heard and understood my translation of this Statement.
4. AYAA Pyerina has acknowledged that the facts and matters set out in her Statement, as translated by me, are true to the best of her knowledge and recollection and has accordingly signed her signature where indicated.

Dated: 26/2/2005

Signed: 

 A P