

Educating Justice with Not For Sale in Uganda

The Place: Uganda

A land-locked country bordering war torn Southern Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya, Northern Uganda has been plagued by a history of conflict. Yet, over the past two decades the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) of the northern region of Uganda has terrorized the region with volatility and atrocity becoming the "forgotten war." What began as a guerilla militia rebelling against the ruling government has turned into a military cult.

Meaningless borders and British social policies drawn in and around Uganda have caused a history of disadvantages to the Acholi people of the northern regions. In 1986 Yoweri Museveni, a military man from the Western region, overthrew the regime of General Tito Okello Lutwa, of the Acholi ethnic group in a bloody coup. In reaction to the attacks on the North by Museveni's troops, surviving members of Okello supporters created a civilian rebel group called the Holy Spirit Movement under the leadership of Alice Lakwena, a spiritual "messenger." Despite the efforts to cleanse the Acholi people of their sins and defeat Museveni's regime, the Holy Spirit Movement was defeated and retreated into Kenya.

In 1987, Joseph Kony, first cousin to Alice, decided to finish what the Holy Spirit Movement began. But little support was given by the Acholi people and Joseph blamed the rejection on the people's "sinful" nature. He decided that if he could not gain the support he felt needed he would "purify" the Acholi people. Joseph Kony would raise Acholi children to understand and be a faithful liberation movement.

The Issue

The LRA has been enslaving children since the twenty years of its inception. Child abductees make up as much as 80 percent of the LRA ranks. They are used to raid villages, execute prisoners, act as baggage porters or sex slaves. Children are often placed in the front line on the battlefield or forced to form rings around senior officers. After the abduction of the child, he or she may be forced to beat an unwanted prisoner to death with a wooden club. For the LRA, children are untouched clay, easily molded and manipulated. Abducting children as young as seven prevents them from developing independence and prevents them from running away. Those children not already taken under by the LRA spend their nights walking in search of safe shelter away from the threat of abduction. There is no doubt that every child in the Northern region is deeply affected by conflict.

The Need

"The United Nations report that 1.7 million people - roughly 85 percent of the population of northern Uganda-have been driven from their homes and today live in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs)." – David Batstone *Not For Sale*.



Following his visit to the camps in Northern Uganda, David Batstone reports that children comprise over half of all residents. The camps lack resources, leaving its residents vulnerable to illness and famine. There is an incredible need to support the rehabilitation of former child soldiers and prevent the recruitment of others.

To change these former mentalities and haunting visions from children born and raised in an environment so violent, vulnerable, and so foreign to the western world into hope, may seem like a daunting task. Yet Not For Sale is committed to creating a safe environment that fosters growth.



Grace Grall Akallo is an ex-slave abducted by the LRA in one of the most publically known and infamous raids of 139 girls from Saint Mary's College private school in the northern region. She notes, "These children need peace. These children need concrete futures. A

matter of counseling a child for only six months doesn't help...[we need you to] mobilize the international community...to protect children and to end the conflict

Why Invest?

In collaboration with the Jesuit community in Uganda and **The Not For Sale Campaign**, the development of Ocer Champion College private secondary school will be built in Gulu, Northern Uganda. **With \$50,000 eight classrooms will be built for students, many of whom have been heavily affected by the war atrocities of the North.** With passion and financial support we can create a sustainable future with education that can equip children living in conflict areas with important life skills. Education is a perpetual door to knowledge and valuable tool that transcends into the future, reducing the risk of vulnerability. The school will create an environment for peace and safety, reversing the effects of living in a marginalized community, and educating a new generation of justice seeking Ugandans.

The Abonoi Okumu family at their home who gave 98 acres of land for the school.



Your Contribution Will:

Provide materials to construct 8 classrooms

Help to enroll a minimum of 35 students by summer 2009

Equip the school with desks, chalkboards, and writing supplies

Provide books and school supplies to students

Donate online at:
www.notforalecampaign.org

Mail Checks to:
The Not For Sale Campaign
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