
CHALLENGES OF TRUTH TELLING AMONG MALE VICTIMS IN SITUATIONS OF CONFLICT: THE CASE OF MT ELGON

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**CONFLICTS
IN MT. ELGON – KENYA**

INTRODUCTION

1. Work with TJRC and Nature of Injustices

-Mandated to investigate injustices between 1963 - 2008

2. Why Mt. Elgon?

-One of the mostly impacted upon negatively by violence

-Mt. Elgon is located in Bungoma County in the western part of Kenya

and is largely inhabited by different communities: Sabaot, Bukusu,

Iteso, Mosop, Soy etc.

3. Why Male Victims?

- The Uniqueness

- Completed forgotten

MT. ELGON



BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT

PHASE 1.

THE RESETTLEMENT FOR THE MOSOP BY THE GOVERNMENT

1971: **1st Resettlement Plan (Chepyuk I)**

1980s: **2nd Resettlement (Chepyuk II)**

1993-2006: **3rd Resettlement (Chepyuk III)**

BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT

PHASE II.

In 2006: The Rebel Saboot Land Defence Force (SLDF) – An Armed Group Was Formed To Resist Resettlements.

- 1. Deliberate killings and “disappearances” of civilians*
- 2. Mutilation and inhumane treatment of civilians*
- 3.- Rape and sexual and gender-based violence*
- 4.-Destruction of property, theft of land and livestock*
- 5.- Torture of women*

PHASE III: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

IN MARCH, 2008:

ABUSES INVOLVING THE KENYA ARMY

- 1. Unlawful killings and enforced disappearances*
 - 2. Torture, arbitrary arrest and detention*
 - 3. Rape and sexual and gender-based violence*
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THE MILITARY RESPONDED WITH FORCE





Some members from the Sabaoth community told the team that they were forced to pull each others' private parts for hours. Some even dies



MOTIVATIONS

- 1. Due to the atrocities, we felt something had to be done to this community***
- 2. In order to help the male victims who were the most affected in this conflict, we felt that we had to get the truth from their side of what had happened to them.***
- 3. People were not ready to talk about the atrocities that took place in Mt Elgon.***
 - 1. To allow the state and the general public to appreciate the sufferings that victims and survivors have underwent***
 - 2. For forgiveness, healing and reconciliation to take place***

PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

1. *Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)*
 2. *Human Rights Watch*
 3. *Transparency International*
 4. *Church Organizations and Leaders*
 5. *Medical providers like Medicin Sans frontier*
 6. *Humanitarian organizations*
 7. *Government officials*
 8. *Community chiefs*
 9. *Male victims and perpetrators where possible*
 10. *Women*
 11. *Elders and Opinion leaders etc.*
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Once in the field, we realised that

in situations of conflict, where there are massive abuses, violation and humiliation, Truth telling becomes almost impossible, especially in this case where the main victims were male.

IMPACTS: MISTRUST AND FEAR

Because of fear and mistrust, the different ethnic groups kept vigil armed waiting to fight and defend themselves any time need Arose.



ETHNIC ANIMOSITY- DAY AND NIGHT THEY PREPARED THEMSELVES IN READINESS TO ATTACK



DESTRUCTION AND DISPLACEMENT



OTHER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- ❑ ***Disruption of Education and Health Crisis***
 - ❑ ***Loss of Identity and Cultural Upheaval***
 - ❑ ***Gender and Child Vulnerability***
 - ❑ ***Militarization of Society***
 - ❑ ***Increase in poverty, Crime and other Social ills***
 - ❑ ***Food Shortage***
 - ❑ ***Disruption of Transport Sector***
 - ❑ ***Proliferation of Small arms & light weapons***
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CHALLENGES TO TRUTH TELLING

- *Cultural taboos and the nature of atrocities*
 - *Humiliation and methodology of TJRC*
 - *Mt. Elgon is very traditional, there are people who take an oath never to tell anyone certain things.*
 - *Security was not guaranteed and lack of trust*
 - *Many victims were*
 - *Political interference and fear of victimization*
 - *Many were still traumatized*
 - *Felt those seeking truth were just coming to do research on them*
 - *Nobody had given them any sustainable help despite all the interviews over and over again*
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RECOMMENDATION AND WAY FORWARD

- *An integrated Approach to Conflict Resolution.*
- *Peace in parts/pieces/ Cumulative peace*
- *Deal with very specific issues in detail and not generally*
- *Involve as many stakeholders as possible, at community, county and national levels*
- *Encourage traditional mechanisms*
- *Social forgiveness, healing and reconciliation*
- *Evaluation*

(future vision)

- *Validation as success story to be used in other cases*
- *To bring a closure to each case we work on, however small*

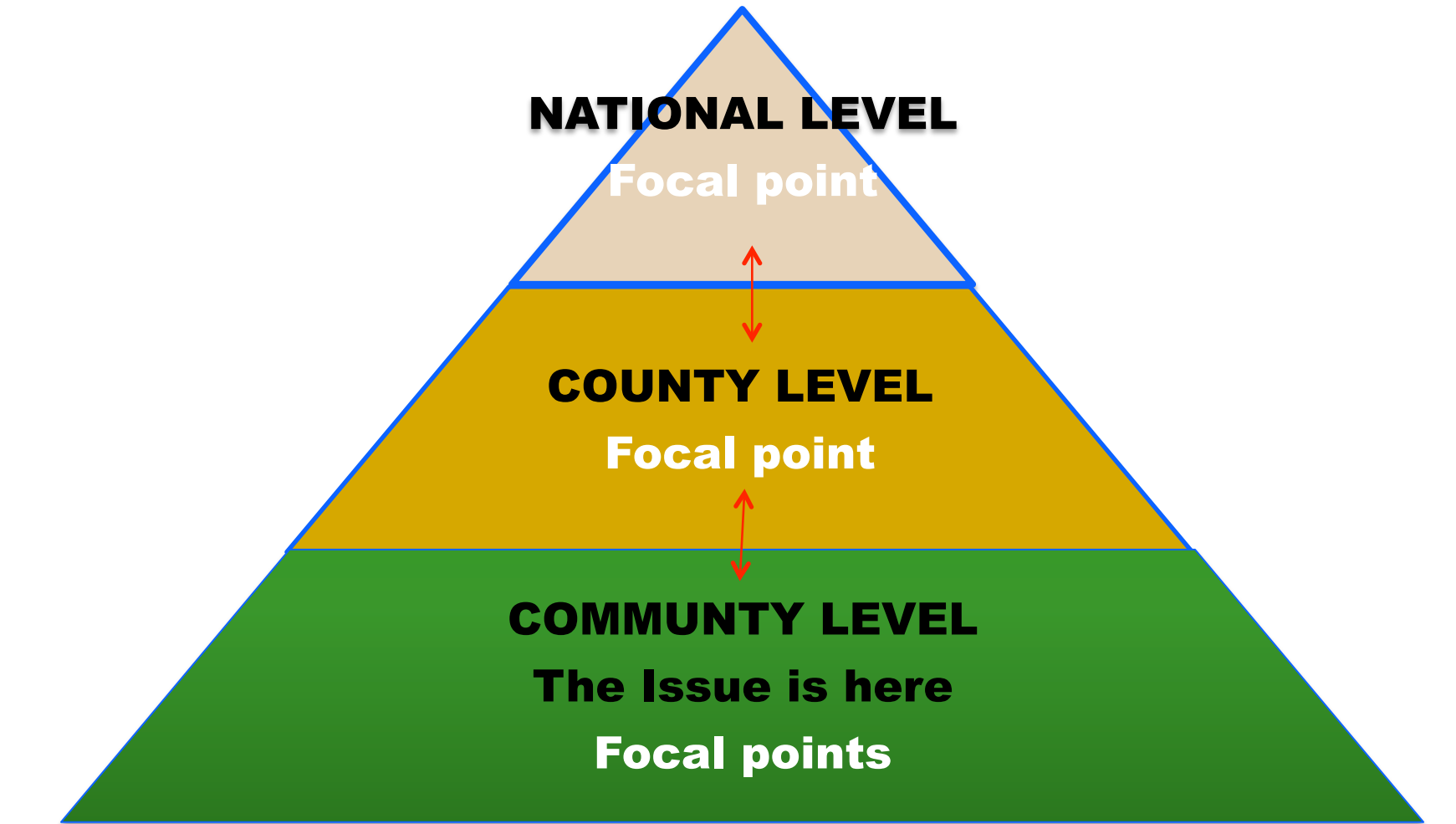
RECOMMENDATIONS

	Activity	Who	Purpose
1.	Conduct research	Researcher, academia	To determine facts
2.	Identify focal persons , from local, county and national Levels to work with	✓ Hospitals and medical staff	Physical healing
		✓ Counsellors	Psychological and trauma healing
		✓ Funders and donors	For the above and material healing
3.	Calling upon Government officials and authority	Authorities	To apologise and take responsibility
4.			For endorsement and legitimacy

All stages are important



Activities must be initiated at all levels for the issue to be resolved and national healing and reconciliation to take place.



CONCLUSION

There is nothing like – war like people what we
have is war – like leaders -**Ralph Bunche**

■ *Positive Ethnicity, if well harmonized can be a strategy for promoting unity among the different communities in Mt. Elgon.*

■ *The different communities must work together to start the process of forgiveness, healing and reconciliation .*

■ *We cannot solve all problems in Mt. Elgon, but we are starting with what we can.*

THANK YOU!
