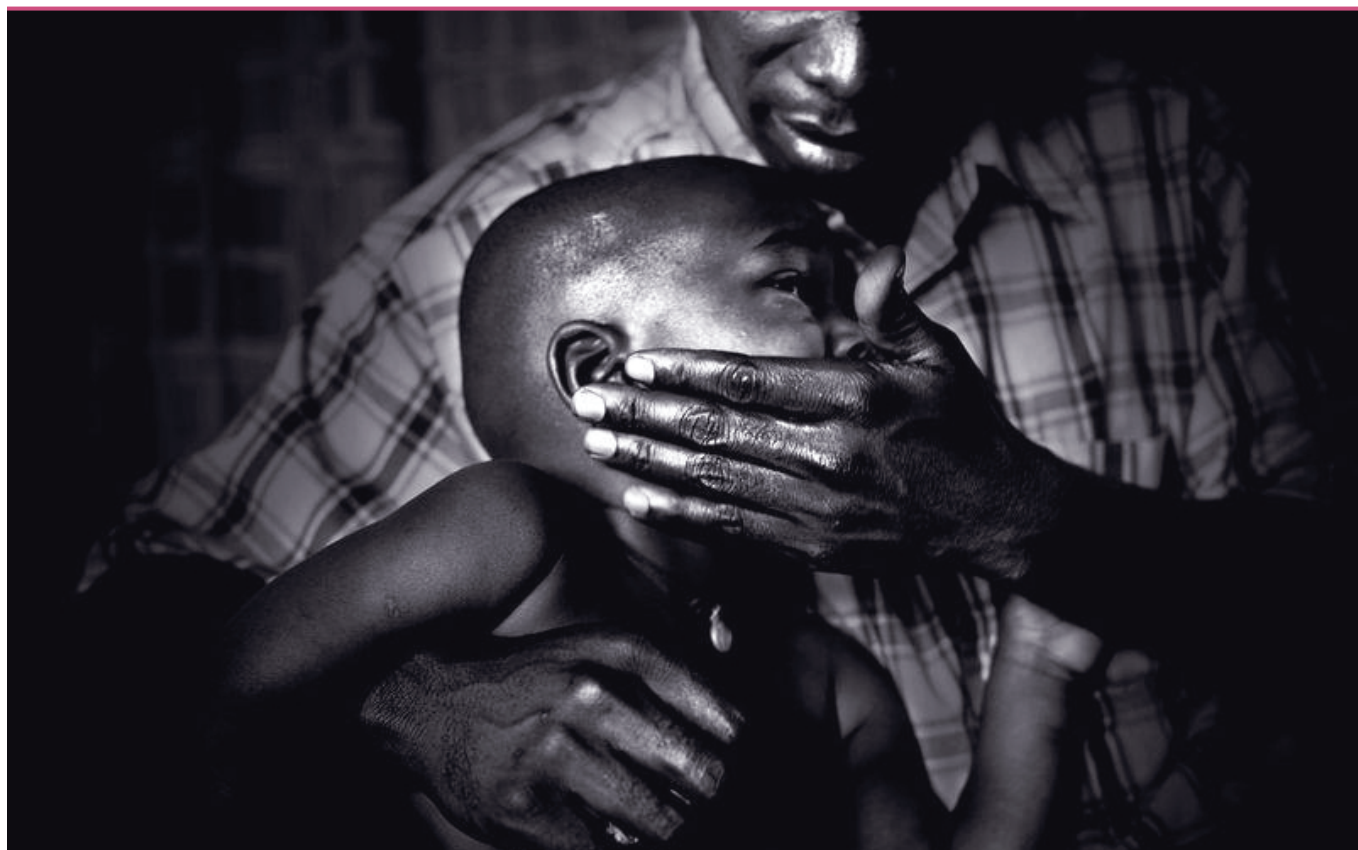




Uganda Human Rights Commission

CHILD SACRIFICE IN UGANDA AND ITS HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS



A Research Study

2014

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FOREWORD

As a National Human Rights institution, the Uganda Human Rights Commission is mandated to protect and promote human rights of all the people of Uganda. This includes the right to life which is fundamental to the enjoyment of all other rights. The Commission is mandated, among other functions, to carry out a continuous programme of research, education and information to enhance respect of human rights. In the recent years, a concern on the violation of children's rights through child sacrifice has been raised by various categories of people in Uganda. This is a new phenomenon which never existed before. This development is causing a great deal of fear in the society and is a threat in the area of protecting children's rights.

In response to this big concern and in strengthening the protection of children's rights as part of the delivery of our Constitutional mandate, the Commission undertook a research study on ***Child Sacrifice in Uganda and its Human Rights Implications***. The study sought to examine child sacrifice in Uganda as a violation of children's human rights, its causes and effects. The research was carried out in the eight (8) districts of Masaka, Rakai, Mukono, Kamuli, Soroti, Hoima, Lira and Gulu. I should point out that the research was conducted in the years 2010 and 2011 and therefore the information and the statistics in the Report are specific to those years. However, we still believe that even with the time lapse, the information collected is still relevant to the cause of eliminating the vice of child sacrifice in our society.

The Uganda Human Rights Commission has the honour of presenting to you this research report on ***Child Sacrifice in Uganda and its Human Rights Implications*** delivered in six (6) Chapters, namely: Introduction and Background of the Problem, Review of Literature, The Legal and Institutional Framework, Presentation of Findings, The Human Rights implications of Child Sacrifice, and Conclusion and Recommendations.

The Commission appeals to the Government of Uganda, its Ministries, all organizations/ institutions and other actors to address the issues discussed in the recommendations of this research report so as to wipe out the abominable phenomenon of child sacrifice in Uganda. It is the Commission's hope that the findings presented in this report will give you an insight into the magnitude of the violation of children's rights through the acts of child sacrifice so that we can join forces to fight the practice vigorously in order to protect the children of Uganda.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY,



Med S.K. Kaggwa
CHAIRPERSON
UGANDA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research study on ***Child Sacrifice in Uganda and its Human Rights Implications*** has been possible through the contributions, support and effort of various institutions, organizations and individuals at all levels. The Uganda Human Rights Commission is indebted to their invaluable contribution toward the process of conducting the study and producing this report. We wish to recognize the financial support of the Basket Fund Donors to the Commission (HRDP) DANIDA and the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) that have made it possible for the commission to conduct and complete this research study.

Appreciation is further extended to the Chairperson, Members of the Commission and the staff of the Commission who provided guidance to the research team throughout the entire research process.

Our gratitude goes to the members of the research team who traversed the different regions of the country administering the research tools to the different research subjects which they later edited, analyzed, compiled and presented as findings in this research report. This team is comprised of the Director Research, Education and Documentation, Ms Dorah B. Kabuye, Senior Human Rights Officer, Mrs. Elizabeth Ndyabagye, and Human Rights Officers, Ms Rebecca Nnanyonjo and Mr. Bosco Okurut. We further wish to thank the Senior Human Rights Officer, Ms Ida Nakiganda, Human Rights Officers, Mr. Phillip Kalibbala and Ms. Alexandria Kirunda and finally Ms. Maureen Nalubega for their valued input into the draft research report.

The Commission is grateful to all the subjects of the research in the sampled districts of Masaka, Rakai, Mukono, Hoima, Kamuli, Soroti, Lira and Gulu. Special thanks go to the District Police Commanders (DPCs), the Officers-in-Charge of the Crime Investigation Departments (CIDs), the Officers-in-Charge (OCs) of the various Police Stations/Posts, Civil Society Organizations, the local and opinion leaders, the community members, and to the parents and relatives of the victims; all of whom willingly provided critical information during the data collection exercise.

The research report would not have been finalized without the input of the Commission Editor, Ms Rose Mary Kemigisha, the team of experts that participated in the validation workshop and the External Editor, Dr. Patrick Wakida of Research World International who finally edited the draft report. We are grateful to them all.



G.T Mwesigye
Secretary to the Commission
Uganda Human Rights Commission



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABC	American Broadcasting Company
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACP	Assistant Commissioner of Police
ANPPCAN	African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect
ASF	Avocats Sans Frontieres
ASTU	Anti Stock Theft Unit
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPC	District Police Commander
FAPAD	Facilitation for Peace and Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIDA	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers
Fig	Figure
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LC	Local Council
NCC	National Council for Children
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OC	Officer-in-Charge
OC CID	Officer-in-Charge of the Criminal Investigations Directorate
PCA	Penal Code Act
S/COUNTY	Sub County
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly



RESEARCH TEAM

- 1) Ms. Dorah B. Kabuye – (*Principle Researcher*) Director of Research, Education and Documentation Directorate, UHRC
- 2) Mrs. Elizabeth Ndyabagye – (*Senior Human Rights Officer*) in the Directorate of Research, Education and Documentation, UHRC
- 3) Ms. Rebecca Nnanyonjo - (*Data Editor*) Human Rights Officer in the Directorate of Research, Education and Documentation, UHRC
- 4) Mr. Bosco Okurut – (*Human Rights Officer/Legal*) in the Directorate of Research, Education and Documentation, UHRC



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From 2010 to 2011, the Uganda Human Rights Commission conducted a research study on ***Child Sacrifice in Uganda and its Human Rights Implications***. The research was conducted in fulfilment of Article 52 (c) of the Constitution of Uganda which mandates the Commission to conduct research in order to enhance the respect of human rights. The prevalence of the practice of child sacrifice in Uganda, and the fact that it targets one of the most vulnerable categories of people, continues to raise grave concern. In conducting its research, the Uganda Human Rights Commission therefore found it imperative to unravel the background of the problem; review all information that has been written on *Sacrifice* in general and *Child Sacrifice* in particular; analyze the legal and institutional framework in place and determine its efficacy in combating child sacrifice; obtain first-hand information from the families of victims and their communities, government institutions and Civil Society Organisations; and make appropriate recommendations to ensure that the problem of child sacrifice is addressed by all the relevant stakeholders.

Chapter One examines the origins of the act of sacrifice, the forms of sacrifice and how it metamorphosed into child sacrifice in some societies. The chapter features the objectives, significance and scope of the Research study. The final section of the chapter highlights the various methodologies utilized by the research team to obtain information.

Chapter Two reviews the literature written about child sacrifice in Uganda. The Chapter details the definition of child sacrifice, its causes, specific incidences of child sacrifice and the alleged perpetrators, and the challenges faced in overcoming child sacrifice as reported or written about by various sources both within and outside Uganda. The reports analyzed include the Uganda Police Force Annual Crime Reports and the Uganda Human Rights Commission Annual Reports.

Chapter Three provides an analysis of the legal and institutional framework in place in Uganda for combating child sacrifice and an analysis of its efficacy. The chapter is divided into two sections namely; the Legal framework and the Institutional framework. The Legal framework is further divided into three sections namely:

- (1) The International Legal framework which examines the provisions of the international instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Prostitution and Child Pornography,
- (2) The Regional Legal framework that examines the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child,



- (3) The National Legal framework that examines Uganda's domestic laws such as the Constitution of Uganda, the Children Act, the Penal Code Act, the Witchcraft Act and the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the research. The chapter provides details of the categories of respondents interviewed by the Commission's research team and the differentiation of the categories of respondents by age. Information obtained from the study is categorized into sections such as; the meaning of child sacrifice, the causes of child sacrifice, and interventions by specific government and non-government actors to combat the practice of child sacrifice. The chapter contains specific case narrative samples that are intended to provide a first-hand perspective of the various faces of child sacrifice in Uganda and the trauma caused to victims' families. Efforts are made in the chapter to analyze, interpret and establish trends as a result of the information collected.

Chapter Five expounds on the human rights implications of child sacrifice. The chapter discusses the specific human rights that are violated as a result of child sacrifice, such as, the right to life, the right to freedom from violence, the right to liberty and security of the person, and the right to protection of the family.

Chapter Six provides a conclusion that reiterates the adverse effects of child sacrifice as discussed in the report and re-emphasizes the fact that child sacrifice amounts to the violation of children's rights. Recommendations are consequently drawn from the report's findings and they are addressed to specific institutions and actors for appropriate action. The recommendations include: the need for diligent enforcement of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, the need for a multi-sector approach in raising awareness about the perils of Child Sacrifice, the need to facilitate the Uganda Police Force in order to reinforce its investigative efforts in cases of child sacrifice, and the need to regulate the activities of traditional healers.



1

CHAPTER

ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

1.0. Introduction

Sacrifice is defined as the act of giving up something valuable or important for somebody or for something else considered of more value or importance.¹ It is a term used in the context of the offering of food, objects or the lives of animals or birds, to a higher purpose or to God or to the *gods* as an act of propitiation or worship.

Literally anything of some value can be a sacrifice in some religions and traditional practices. The more valuable the offering, the more highly the sacrifice is regarded and thus, the more difficult it is to make.² Commonly, the most valuable sacrifices have been those of lives; animal or human.³

Some explanations that have been put forth as to why people engage in sacrifice rituals include: the gods need sacrifice to sustain themselves and their power without which they are diminished; sacrificed goods are used to make a bargain with the god who has promised some favour in return for the sacrifice; and that the sacrificial victim is offered as a scapegoat target for the wrath of a god, which wrath would otherwise be cast on the followers.⁴

Sacrifices are a common theme in most religions, but the frequency of sacrifice of animals and human beings is quite rare in today's congregations.⁵ In modern times, even the once common practice of animal sacrifice has virtually disappeared from all major religions (or has been re-cast in terms of ritual slaughter), and human sacrifice has become extremely rare. Most religions condemn the practice, and present-day laws treat it as murder. In the context of a society which condemns human sacrifice, the term ritual murder is used.⁶

1 English Dictionary(North America) 1884

2 Hubert, Henri: Marcel Mauss (1981). *Sacrifice: its Nature and Function*. University of Chicago press, pg. 31

3 Ibid

4 *Human Sacrifice: In History and Today*, by Nigel Davies; Dorset Press, 1981 ISBN: 0-88029-211-3, pg. 24

5 Ibid pg. 25

6 Clifford Williams, *Human Sacrifice or Capital Punishment? An Assessment of the Period 1807–1874*, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3. (1988), pp. 433–441



In Africa, there have been several allegations of children sacrificed in *muti* (a term for traditional medicine in Southern Africa as far north as Lake Tanganyika) rituals and practices of witchcraft intended to bring prosperity to those performing the sacrifice.⁷

The practice of ritual murder is rooted in traditional beliefs and a number of socio-economic and cultural factors have been put forth to explain the sudden increase in its occurrence in recent years. The three groups most susceptible to this cruelty are children, women and the elderly.⁸ It is said that children are targeted because they are believed to be pure and are considered spiritually clean; a fact that makes them a soft target for witchdoctors' ritualistic practices.⁹

Child sacrifice is still in practice on the African continent, and Uganda is one of the affected countries where the act is seemingly on the rise. This has been attributed to various reasons including; poverty, weak legislation, and the prevailing beliefs associated with the indigenous culture of making sacrifices in an attempt to appease gods.¹⁰

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In Sub-Sahara Africa, ritual mutilations and murders occur majorly for traditional purposes. Sacrifice is, and has been for many years, a large part of Ugandan tradition among different cultural communities. It is a belief in some communities that the sacrifice of animals and birds serves a purpose as demanded by the spirits or gods.

In the history of the practice of traditional healing in Uganda, the ritual of child sacrifice is nonexistent. In fact, it is perceived as a criminal activity undertaken mainly by those disguising as traditional healers with the intent of exploiting people's religious and cultural beliefs, their fears, or satisfying the desire to gain quick wealth.¹¹

Nonetheless, it is still a common belief among many communities of Uganda that shedding of blood of some kind is necessary to celebrate success or chase away evil spirits or to protect someone from misfortune. In most communities, such sacrifices are made in form of slaughtering goats, chicken or cows. However, the biggest concern is that it has now gone to the level of sacrificing human beings.¹²

7 Muliro Telewa, Kenyan arrests for 'witch' deaths BBC, 22/05/2008
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7415502.stm>

8 Gladys K. Mwiti, Child Abuse Detection, Prevention and Counseling, 1997, pg. 123

9 Mubatsi Asinja Habati, *Uganda's epidemic of child sacrifice*, The Independent, Thursday, February 25, 2009 <http://www.independent.co.ug/index.php/society/37-society/620-ugandas-epidemic-of-child-sacrifice>

10 *Uganda's Epidemic of Child Sacrifice*, The Independent, Wednesday, February 26, 2009

11 Uganda Police Force Criminal Investigations Directorate, Human Sacrifice Overview Report, 2009

12 Ibid



In Uganda, the murder of children for the extraction of body parts for “ritual sacrifice” has been cited by the media as an issue at a rampant increase in the past few years. This has stood out as a violation of children’s rights. Child abduction and killings for ritual sacrifice, especially in central Uganda, has been on the rise. There are various reasons for child sacrifice which shall be discussed later in the report. It should be noted that child sacrifice does not only involve the fatal incidences where the victims die but also those where they do not die but are physically harmed &/or mentally affected by the attempted incident of child sacrifice.

Uganda Human Rights Commission was therefore compelled to conduct a research study on ***Child Sacrifice in Uganda and its Human Rights Implications*** following the need to address the existing gaps in the fight against this gruesome practice.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

- To establish the causes and effects of child sacrifice in Uganda.
- To establish the reporting mechanisms in place and further establish the responses towards combating child sacrifice in Uganda.
- To identify strategies and make recommendations for the fight against child sacrifice in Uganda.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Uganda Human Rights Commission conducted the study on ***Child Sacrifice in Uganda and its Human Rights Implications*** with a view of generating facts on the vice. It is hoped that the report of the study will create prominence of the problem among all the duty bearers and provide a platform for initiating and improving the relevant interventions in the fight against the practice.

It is hoped that the study will provide information on the problem that will prompt the review of laws relevant to its redress. It is further hoped that the study will provide a platform for improvement in the reporting mechanisms and strengthen the relevant interventions in the fight against the practice of child sacrifice.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The study covered the districts of Mukono, Masaka, Rakai, Lira, Gulu, Kamuli, Soroti and Hoima. Participants were both female and male, of different age categories, and from various institutions such as Civil Society Organizations, Police and Government ministries. Other participants included local community leaders, parents / relatives of the victims and members of the communities where incidences of child sacrifice were reported.



These districts were selected in consideration of their regionalization, prevalence of incidences of child sacrifice in the district, and the need to obtain different cultural views on the subject.

It was projected that the selected participants could provide useful information about the dynamics of the vice of child sacrifice since most of them had directly or indirectly experienced its impact. The study also sought the views of respondents who had not directly or indirectly dealt with situations of child sacrifice but could recommend actions on improving the safety of their communities.

The selected sub-counties visited in the sampled districts are as shown in Table I below.

Table 1: Districts and Sub-counties visited during the Study

S/N	Sub County	District
1	Kamuli Town Council	Kamuli District
2	Bulopa Sub-county	
3	Kitayunjwa Sub-county	
4	Nawanyago Sub-county	
5	Buzaaya South	
6	Mbulamuti Sub-county	
7	Bugabula Sub-county	
8	Nabwigulu Sub-county	
9	Hoima Municipality	Hoima District
10	Buhimba Sub-county	
11	Buseruka Sub-county	
12	Kyabigambire Sub-county	
13	Bugahya Sub-county	
14	Kiziranfumbi Sub-county	
15	Kibingo Sub-county	Masaka District
16	Bukakata Sub-county	
17	Kyanamukaka Sub-county	
18	Kabonera Sub-county	
19	Mukungwe Sub-county	
20	Kimanya-Kyabakuza Sub-county	
21	Nyendo Ssenyange Division	
22	Masaka Municipality	



S/N	Sub County	District
23	Dwaniiro Sub-county	Rakai District
24	Kakuuto Sub-county	
25	Kyebe Sub-county	
26	Kabonera Sub-county	
27	Lwanda Sub-county	
28	Rakai Town council	
29	Kyotera Town council	
30	Kibanda Sub-county	
31	Lwamagwa Sub-county	Greater Mukono District
32	Mukono division	
33	Nyenga Sub-county	
34	Lugazi Town council	
35	Ntenjeru Sub-county	Lira District
36	Lira Municipality	
37	Olilim Sub-county	
38	Orum Sub-county	
39	Adwari Sub-county	Gulu District
40	Abia Sub-county	
41	Gulu Municipality	Soroti District
42	Awach Sub-county	
43	Soroti Municipality; East and Western divisions	
44	Kyere Sub-county	
45	Soroti Sub-county	
46	Gweri Sub-county	

1.5. Methodology

The study was both qualitative and quantitative and it applied theoretical and practical approaches. The research combined four complementary methods of data collection, namely; Questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews and field observations. The methodology used provided an opportunity for the active participation of all people in different categories and for a variety of approaches for the integration of information. In addition to the above methods, desk research was conducted, through which reports and information gathered by different people on the phenomenon of child sacrifice were compiled.

The research design combined four complementary methods of data collection. These included;



Questionnaires

In all the eight (8) districts sampled, a total number of forty (40) questionnaires were administered in each district to different stakeholders working to promote and protect children's rights. These stakeholders included the Police, Civil Society Organizations, Local leaders and District leaders in charge of Children's affairs.

A total of 320 questionnaires were successfully responded to by the respective participants identified. These yielded most of the numerical data quoted and other information presented in the analysis.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions in the targeted communities were non discriminative of gender. Selected members of the study population focused on parents, local leaders and community members who had insights on child sacrifice. A total number of 40 discussion groups were held at community level and 10 held with school children in all the eight sampled districts.

Key informant interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with a total number of 14 children who were reported to have survived child sacrifice and 402 adults. The adults were identified with regard to their experiences and the knowledge they had on the vice of child sacrifice based on the reports provided at the Police Stations/Posts in their respective communities. The willingness of the bereaved parents/guardians, police officers, social welfare officers in CSOs, teachers, local leaders and religious leaders to share their experiences was a matter of consideration. The main aim was to acquire deeper insights regarding the details of child sacrifice.

Field observations

In addition to data collection in the field, researchers made observations of the status of the victims' homes & the surrounding, to better understand the possible causes and effects, and the complexity of child sacrifice.

Desk research

In addition to the above methodologies used, information from different articles and reports on child sacrifice authored by different writers, from newspapers and the internet, informed this study.

Prior to obtaining information, participants were informed of the purpose of the research and consent was obtained. Due to the traumatic nature of the information they were providing, researchers were sensitive to the needs of the respondents, most especially the children who were once kidnapped and the bereaved parents/guardians of the victims of sacrifice. Participants who needed further help such as counselling and police interventions were referred to the appropriate institutions.



2

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter is set to show what the available literature has to articulate about sacrifice. It should be noted that this practice involves the sacrifice of plants, animals and even human beings in some instances.

Defining Sacrifice, Human sacrifice, and Child sacrifice.

Sacrifice is defined as the act of offering something to a deity in propitiation or homage, usually the ritual slaughter of an animal or a person¹

Human sacrifice is the killing, mutilating, and removal of organs or body parts of a person for sale or for the purpose of witchcraft, ritual or any harmful human practices². Human sacrifices are primarily defined as the 'killing of people as an offering to a deity as an act of worship or propitiation.' However, in some cultures, human sacrifices are also performed to send messages to *gods* on behalf of the sacrificing community, and to cure one who is ill by sacrificing someone else as a substitute.

Child Sacrifice, as defined by the Jubilee Campaign and Kyampisi Childcare Ministries, is the act of murdering a child by a witch-doctor or their accomplices in order to use the child's blood, organs and/or limbs in a mixture of herbs and other elements in a ritual witchcraft ceremony. The witch-doctor organises the abduction and sacrifice and then undertakes the criminal act for payment. The witch-doctor convinces their client that this ritual murder will make their magical rite more potent and that it will fulfil their wish of gaining wealth and prosperity, or any other needs set forth.³

Within the Jubilee Campaign and Kyampisi Childcare Ministries Child Uganda report, there is use of the words "*witch-doctor*" and "*witchcraft*". The Witchcraft Act⁴ defines witchcraft to mean any spiritual worship that is not bonafide. The Witchcraft Act creates a limitation on the use of that definition when it states that the definition is made for the



purposes of that particular Act¹³⁵. In Uganda, however, the use of the term “*witchcraft*” connotes evil spiritualism or divination, or sorcery. It is also used in creating a contrast between mainstream religion⁶ and African Spiritualism that was practiced before the coming of the mainstream religions. The “*witch-doctor*” is the practitioner of this evil spiritualism.

In conclusion, human sacrifice, and by proxy, child sacrifice, is the ritualistic killing of children in order to please or propitiate a god or supernatural beings in order to achieve a desired result. Whereas human sacrifice deals with the universal view of humanity, child sacrifice specifically targets children who are vulnerable and innocent; an easy target for the perpetrators.

History of Human / Child Sacrifice

Human sacrifice, which includes child sacrifice, is believed to have been practiced as far back as the Stone Age and is a worldwide concept stretching as far as China to Arabia, throughout Africa, Europe and both the Americas.

In his book *Human Sacrifice: A brief Introduction*¹⁴, Jan N. Bremmer wrote that it is clear that human sacrifice was practiced in the Stone Age, and it is therefore not surprising that it occurs in one of our oldest surviving religious texts. Bremmer added that although the article presented only a selection of important cases, other literature shows that human sacrifice was once widespread further, adding that it was practiced not only among the ancient Germans, whose practices are the subject of one of the earliest books on the subject¹⁵ and other early European peoples,¹⁶ but also in the Ancient Near East,¹⁷ among the Arabs,¹⁸ the Turks,¹⁹ Indonesia,²⁰ West Africa, native Americans,²¹ and Polynesia²²—just to mention more recent investigations.

-
- 13
14 Theol.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/2007/Human/Bremmer-Human Sacrifice
15 G. Schütze, *De Cruentis Germanorum Gentilium Victimis Humanis: Liber Unus*
(Leipzig, 1743); see most recently A. Hultgård, ‘Menschenopfer’, in *Reallexikon
der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, Vol. 19 (Berlin and New York, 2001) 533-46.
16 K. Dowden, *European Paganism* (London and New York, 2000) 179-88, 280-90.
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of Asian History* 5 (1971) 140-46.
19 11 R. Jordaan and R. Wessing, ‘Human Sacrifice at Prambanan’, *Bijdragen tot de taal-
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Graham, ‘The Slave Trade, Depopulation and Human Sacrifice in Benin History’, *Cahiers
d’Études Africaines* 6 (1965) 317-34; R. Law, ‘Human sacrifice in Pre-Colonial West
Africa’, *African Affairs* 84 (1985) 53-87.
21 13 S.B. Ross, *Das Menschenopfer der Skidi-Pawnee* (Bonn, 1989).
22 A. Schoch, *Rituelle Menschentötungen in Polynesien* (Ulm, 1954); G. Obeyesekere,
Cannibal talk: the man-eating myth and human sacrifice in the South Seas (Berkeley, Los
Angeles, London, 2005).



Whereas most human sacrifice was carried out for the sake of religion, it was also known to have been a fundamental part of many historic “civilizations” for a large variety of reasons²³. There were many civilizations/communities that carried out what are now considered bizarre practices to do more than appease their gods. For example²⁴:

- 1) In early Egyptian civilization, once deceased, the Pharaoh was buried along with their servants - who were possibly still alive at the time of burial.
- 2) In Ghana, formerly known as Dahomey, there were annual gift-giving and decapitation ceremonies in which people’s heads were cut off and presented as gifts to the King.
- 3) In India, ritualistic ‘assassinations’ carried about by “thuggees”, all in the name of the Hindu goddess Kali.
- 4) The Mayans held a deep belief in divine power which they believed was held in ‘cenotes’ (limestone sinkholes), portals to the underworld. Thus, they would ‘cast’ or throw people into these portals, believing they wouldn’t die. The victims were never seen again.
- 5) In the name of architecture, the Chinese civilization often substituted sacrifice to appease gods with the sacrificial purpose of strengthening the structure of a building.
- 6) At the height of their civilization, the Aztecs were rather famous for many sacrificial rituals such as the removal of a living person’s heart in honor of the great god Huitzilopochtli.
- 7) In Fiji, widows were strangled and buried besides their deceased husbands as it was believed that a man should not be apart from his wife. It was the duty of the widow’s brother to carry out this ‘honour’.
- 8) The people of the Phoenician and Carthaginian civilization religiously sacrificed children. It was the most extreme sacrifice at the time and so was believed to be the best means of protecting the entire community. The sacrifices were known as ‘Mulk’ (or ‘King’ offerings) while the sacrificial areas of the Phoenicians were known as the ‘Topeth’ (the roasting place); a clear reference to the means by which the child victims were sacrificed.

23 listverse.com/2012/12/15/Top Ten Bizarre Methods of Human Sacrifice

24 <http://knowledgeguts.com>





An artist's depiction of a child being ritually sacrificed at the "Topeth"²⁵

Child Sacrifice and Judaism

The history of child sacrifice in ancient Israel, and God's response to the practice, can be uncovered by examining the biblical texts that address it in the Pentateuch, historical books and prophetic writings²⁶. In Genesis, the first book of the Bible²⁷, Abraham is said to have almost sacrificed his son to show his devotion to God when an angel stopped him and gave him a ram to sacrifice instead.

In later records of the Pentateuch, Moses warned the Israelites, who would soon enter the land of Canaan²⁸ where they would be exposed to the cult of Molech, not to sacrifice any of their children to the god:

The Lord said to Moses, say to the Israelites: "Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. I will set my face against that man and I will cut him off from his people; for by giving his children to Molech he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech and they fail to put him to death,

- 25 [listverse.com/2012/12/15/ Top Ten Bizarre Methods of Human Sacrifice](http://listverse.com/2012/12/15/Top-Ten-Bizarre-Methods-of-Human-Sacrifice)
 26 (Jeremiah 19:4-6(New Living Translation, 2nd Edition):-For Israel has forsaken and...burn incense to foreign gods....5 they have built pagan shrines to Baal and there they burn their sons as sacrifices to Baal. Jeremiah 7:31,32 (New Living Translation, 2nd Edition) So, beware, a time is coming when...that garbage dump will no longer be called Topeth or the valley of Ben Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter. They will bury the bodies in Topeth until there is no more room for them.
 27 Genesis 22:1-16 (New Living Translation, 2nd Edition)
 28 Leviticus 18:3 and 20:21-24



I will set my face against that man and his family and will cut off from their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech²⁹.

With remarkable discernment, Moses recognized that such unacceptable service can sometimes begin not as a conscious determination to do ungodly things but as an “ensnaring” by other nations and their gods³⁰.

Today, just like it was in the days of Moses, Christianity continues to shun and condemn the practice of child sacrifice in all forms.

In conclusion, human/child sacrifice is a practice that can be traced back as far as human civilization as we know it. Due to various challenges, deeply imbedded beliefs and traditions, it continues to thrive in many forms and in communities throughout the world.

Within the report, there is use of the words “*witch-doctor*” and “*witchcraft*”. The Witchcraft Act³¹ defines witchcraft to mean any spiritual worship that is not bonafide. The Witchcraft Act creates a limitation on the use of that definition when it states that the definition is made for the purposes of that particular Act³². In Uganda, however, the use of the term “*witchcraft*” connotes evil spiritualism, or divination, or sorcery. It is also used in creating a contrast between mainstream religion³³ and African Spiritualism that was thriving before the coming of the main stream religions. The “*witch-doctor*” is the practitioner of this evil spiritualism.

2.1. The Practice of Child Sacrifice and Proof of its Existence

Reports of incidences of child sacrifice have been rampant in Uganda since the 1990s and have continued to escalate, peaking with the arrest and final conviction of a one Kato Kajubi in 2012 for the crime of murder of a 12 year old boy whose body parts were used for ritualistic sacrifice.

As elaborated below, the practice of child sacrifice has been prominently covered by institutional reports such as Annual Reports by the Uganda Police Force and the Uganda Human Rights Commission. The practice of Child Sacrifice has also been an issue of concern during Uganda’s state reporting processes to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Cases of child sacrifice have been handled by courts of law and specific incidents of child sacrifice have been prominently covered by the local media and have also attracted the attention of the foreign press.

29 Leviticus 20:1-5 and 18:21

30 Deuteronomy 12:30-31

31 S.1 Witchcraft Act cap 124

32 Ibid

33 In Uganda this is mainly Christianity and its branches, and Islam



2.2. National coverage of Child Sacrifice

2.2.1. Court Cases

The case of ***Uganda vs. Godfrey Kato Kajubi HCT-06-CRSC 16/2009*** is the most prominent one involving child sacrifice that has been handled by courts of law. The facts of the case revealed the gruesome face of the practice of child sacrifice in Uganda.

In October 2008, the torso of a boy, Joseph Kasirye, was found in a swamp; headless and with no genitals. This led to a manhunt for the suspects. These were Kato Kajubi, a Kampala businessman, Umar Kateregga, a traditional practitioner, and his wife Mariam Nabukeera. On interrogation, Kateregga and Nabukeera revealed that the victim had been killed and his private parts cut off and handed over to Kato Kajubi.

The three suspects were indicted for murder. Later, Kateregga and Nabukeera turned state witnesses and the charges against them were dropped.

In the first hearing, the Kajubi was acquitted for murder. He was later rearrested and convicted for the same offence in a retrial in the same High Court in 2012.³⁴

2.2.2. The Uganda Police Force Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Reports

The Uganda Police Force has highlighted the crime of child sacrifice in its Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Reports. In 2008, 25 cases of ritual murder where children were victims were reported.³⁵ Of these nineteen (19) were male and six (6) were female. The 2008 report noted with grave concern the rising cases of ritual murders especially against children by over 800% from three (3) cases reported in 2007 to the twenty-five (25) cases that were reported and investigated in 2008.³⁶ In early 2009, a composite inter-ministerial Anti-Human Sacrifice/Human Trafficking Task Force was set up to combat ritual murders.³⁷ The Task Force was mandated to monitor, coordinate and spearhead intelligence, investigations and public sensitization on ritual murders and human trafficking.³⁸

The membership of the Anti-Human Sacrifice and Trafficking Task Force constitutes of representatives from the Police, Internal Security Organisation (ISO), Immigration, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

³⁴ Session case no 28/2012

³⁵ Uganda Police, Crime Report 2008. Pg. 42

³⁶ Id. Pg. 11

³⁷ Id.

³⁸ Id. Pg. 42



At its establishment, the Task Force was under the command of Moses Binoga, the Commissioner of Police. It has compiled reports of its interventions, some of which include enhancement of public sensitization against the practice of human sacrifice, mobilization of traditional herbalists and healers, and enhancement of police investigations and intelligence collection.³⁹

In 2009, out of the twenty-nine (29) ritual murder cases that were reported, fifteen (15) involved children as the victims.⁴⁰ In 2010, the cases of ritual murders that were reported to the Police decreased to fourteen (14), a decrease by 51%, and of these nine (9) involved children as victims.⁴¹ The decrease was attributed to increased vigilance by the Police, media/press, concerned NGOs, religious leaders, senior government officials and members of the public against the practice of child sacrifice.⁴² In 2011, the number of ritual murder cases reported to the police further decreased to eight (8).⁴³ However, there was no further categorization of the number of cases that involved children as victims.

Some of the challenges in combating the practice of ritual murders as identified by the Uganda Police in its Annual Crime Reports include:

- Many people still believe in witchcraft and practice suspicious rituals
- The continued existence of fake traditional healers (bafere) who demand for specific body parts
- Reports of missing persons and suspected ritual murders are sometimes made late to Police who often find the crime scene(s) already tampered with.
- Laxity by some parents, guardians and those entrusted with taking care of children
- The lack of a clear government policy on the conduct of traditional healers which makes it difficult to identify the criminal ones amongst them.
- General delays in concluding the prosecution process which has led to some suspects who have been released on bail after the mandatory remand period interfering with the witnesses or running away.

2.2.3. The Uganda Human Rights Commission Annual Reports

The Uganda Human Rights Commission has expressed concern over the practice of child sacrifice and its human rights implications through its annual reports.

39 Uganda Police, Human Sacrifice Overview Report for the Year 2009. Pg. 4

40 Uganda Police Force Annual Crime Report 2009 Pg. 5

41 Uganda Police, Annual Crime and Road Safety/Traffic Report 2010. Pg. 8

42 Id. Pg. 9

43 Uganda Police, Annual Crime and Road Safety /Traffic Report 2011. Pg. 9



The Commission noted that in the course of 1998 and 1999, the media reported a total of 31 cases involving ritual killings of children. This indicated that the perpetrators were targeting the most innocent and vulnerable members of society. The Commission condemned the ritual killings; blaming them on weird beliefs and greed on the part of those who indulge in the gruesome practice.⁴⁴

The Commission has also highlighted specific incidences of child sacrifice, such as the story of Edrine Muguluma, a five year old boy hailing from Rubaga division in Kampala, who was sacrificed by people claiming to be searching for wealth⁴⁵, or that of Shafik Magombe, aged 9, who was allegedly kidnapped on 28th December 2008 by a motorcycle rider with the intent of sacrificing him but who survived the ritual because he was circumcised.⁴⁶

The Commission noted that there are many incidents that go unreported by the communities and there exist gaps in collection of evidence related to child sacrifice.⁴⁷ The Commission identified the factors perpetuating human sacrifice to include: high poverty levels, inadequacies in the investigations processes conducted by security agencies due to lack of facilities for forensic evidence, inadequate awareness about human sacrifice and the absence of a specific law governing traditional healers.⁴⁸

2.3. Concluding observations by the Committee on the Rights of the Child

In November 2004, Uganda submitted its second periodic report under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.⁴⁹ In its concluding observations in response to Uganda's second periodic report, the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted with deep concern that numerous cases of child sacrifice were taking place in the districts of Mukono and Kayunga; a serious violation of the most fundamental rights of the child.⁵⁰ The Committee recommended that Uganda takes the following measures in its interventions:⁵¹

- (a) Adopt appropriate legislative measures specifically prohibiting the practice of child sacrifice at the local level;

44 The Uganda Human Rights Commission, Annual Report 1998, pg. 52

45 The Uganda Human Rights Commission, 9th Annual Report, pg. 95

46 The Uganda Human Rights Commission, 11th Annual Report, pg. 58

47 Id. Pg. 57

48 Id. Pg. 58

49 The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by its State parties. All States parties are obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights embedded in the CRC are being implemented.

50 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Uganda, Doc. No. CRC/C/UGA.CO/2, 23 November 2005. Concluding observation 33

51 Id. Concluding observation 34



- (b) Continue to ensure that people who sacrifice children are reported to the authorities and prosecuted; and
- (c) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns, through local Governments, on negative cultural practices, especially in the districts concerned.

2.4. National Press Coverage of the Acts of Child Sacrifice

2.4.1. Bukedde Newspaper

Wednesday January 2, 2008⁵²

Bukedde reported the arrest of three men who killed a girl and extracted some of her body parts in Kalisizo. According to the article, three men snatched a one-year old girl and a two-year old boy and delivered them to a businessman who had promised to pay them a specified amount if they brought him a live child. When a search was carried out, two men, Emmanuel Kizza and Nabukumizi Magangala were found with the missing boy. After being beaten, they told the people that they had killed the girl and had dropped the remaining parts of her body near a lake. When the police of Kalisizo got to the beach, they found the girl still alive. Unfortunately, she died on the way to hospital. The post-mortem at Kalisizo hospital revealed that the girl's tongue and genitalia had been extracted. The suspects later revealed that a local businessman, Juma Kibirige, had sent them for a living child, with a promise to pay them shs. 3,000,000 (three million shillings). Apparently, because Kibirige had not specified the sex of the child, they had decided to carry both a boy and a girl, and when the businessman chose the girl, they released the boy.

May 13th 2008⁵³

It was reported that a ten-year old twin girl, Amina Babirye, reported to Police that she saw her brother's head being severed off by a traditional medicine practitioner called Amidu Mujaasi. She stated that they had been taken to this man by their foster mother, Beatrice Kalungi Namboozo, who wanted to sell them to this man. The children were residents of Nango village in Mayuge district. When the man realized that Babirye's ears were pierced, she was rejected and dropped at Kamuli hospital but her body was mutilated.

November 16th 2008⁵⁴

A witness was reported to have seen his employer, a businessman, bury a girl of about 7 years in the ground floor of a storied building under construction in Kampala. He alleges that a hole was dug in the ground floor and the child, who was alive, was covered with dirt. He testified that this happened around 1am, on a Friday in September 2006.

52 Ali Mambule, *Abaasaddaase Omwana Bakwaate*, Bukedde Newspaper, Wednesday January 2, 2008, pg. 5

53 Tony Nsoona, *Yasazeeko Kato Omutwe*, Bukedde Newspaper, May 13, 2008, pg. 2.

54 Author not disclosed, *Nalaba Omugagga mu Kampala Ng'Asaddaaka Omwana mu Kizimbe*, Bukedde Newspaper, November 16, 2008. Pgs. 1, 2, 14, 15



That the foreman had directed some of the witness's colleagues to dig a hole near a pillar and informed them that they were going to plant something there. On that night in September, some workers, including the witness, were working the night shift. When his work was done, he and other friends remained on the upper floor. At about 1am, the witness decided to go out and buy himself some warm tea for the night. That was when he saw the owner of the building emerge out of his car with two men. The owner called out the child, a girl of about 7 years, who was then taken to the hole and placed in it in the upright position. Then one of the men gathered concrete and started pouring it on her.

December 3rd 2008⁵⁵

It was reported that a native medicine practitioner, Sam Lwanyaga, had been arrested by Police in Entebbe on suspicion of kidnapping a 9-year old girl with the intention of subjecting the child to acts of human sacrifice. The victim was kidnapped while on her way home from school.

December 12th 2008⁵⁶

It was reported that the authorities were using the Traditional Healers Association to combat acts of child sacrifice. In this story, a mother alleged that the spirit of her dead daughter had possessed her and directed her to the place where her daughter's body parts were buried. The Police was then put under pressure by the public to break down the house where it was suspected that the body parts of the victim had been buried. When the Police got overwhelmed by the situation, they employed the services of a popular traditional spiritualist, Sylvia Namutebi (popularly known as Maama Fiina), to help them identify the spot where the parts had been buried as guided by the spirits that had allegedly possessed the mother of the victim.

December 12th 2008⁵⁷

It was reported that Members of Parliament had urged President Museveni to give orders for an extra-judicial summary execution of anyone suspected of having kidnapped a person and subjected them to acts of child sacrifice. The suggestion was made by MPs belonging to the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Food Security. They also highlighted the challenges of distinguishing bonafide traditional spiritualists from malevolent traditional spiritualists. They identified that the challenge in Uganda with people who practice traditional spiritualism is that both evil and bonafide spiritualists are considered bonafide by the people. They asked for the registration of all traditional spiritualists so as to sieve out those who practice the malevolent spiritualism.

55 Richard Kayiira, *Omusamize Akwatiddwa ku By'okubba Omwana*, Bukedde Newspaper, December 3, 2008, pg. 2

56 Alex Mwanga, *Bakoonye Ennyumba y'Omugagga nga Banoonya Omutwe gw'Omwana*, Bukedde Newspaper, December 12, 2008, pg. 4

57 Muwanga Kakooza, *Bakubwe Amasasi*, Bukedde Newspaper, December 12, 2008, pg. 8



This position was re-echoed by President Museveni, who also blamed the weak justice system for letting suspects go free.⁵⁸

December 15th 2008⁵⁹

The newspaper reported that a one Ssaalongo severed the heads of his twins for the purpose of selling them to a businessman for 12,000,000 shillings. He first sent his older children for groceries. When they returned, they found their siblings decapitated and made an alarm. The suspect was forced to talk and when he did, said that a businessman had asked him for the two heads of the twins in exchange for the money. The children were 3 years old.

20th December 2008⁶⁰

The paper reported that a 2-year old girl that had initially been reported missing had been found dead. Her throat had been slit and the tongue was cut out. The body had also been mutilated.

2.4.2. The New Vision

March 18th, 2009⁶¹

It was reported that the then Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Ali Kirunda Kivejinja, revealed that there are government officials who may be involved in questionable practices and are escalating practices of human and child sacrifice. He was quoted saying that there was an increasing number of people, including the elite and senior government officials, who believe and practice traditional rituals.

2.4.3. The Monitor

December 30, 2012⁶²

It was reported that the body of a two year old boy, with the private parts cut off, was found dumped in the coffee garden of one John Mugerwa of Kasambya village, Matete Sub-county, Sembabule district on 27th December 2012. It was suspected that the victim's private parts were taken for ritual sacrifice purposes.

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- 58 Richard Kayiira, *Abasaddaaka Abaana Basaana Kukubwa Masasi*, Bukedde Newspaper, 23rd December '08, pg. 2
- 59 Henry Ssenyondo, *Ssaalongo Asazeeko Abaana be 2 Emitwe*, Bukedde Newspaper, December 15, 2008, pg. 2
- 60 L. Kagiri and R. Kayiira, *Omwana Omulala Bamussaddaase*, Bukedde Newspaper, pg. 1 & 2
- 61 Joyce Namutebi and Catherine Bekunda, *Government Officials involved in Witchcraft, says Kivejinja*, New Vision Newspaper, pg. 13
- 62 Issa Aliga, *Dismembered body Recovered in Sembabule*, Sunday Monitor, pg. 3



2.5. Coverage by the International Press

In January 2010, BBC⁶³ reported that a former practitioner, Polino Angela, who abandoned the practice of child sacrifice in 1990 and now campaigns to end it confessed for the first time to having murdered about 70 people, including his own son.

Mr. Angela revealed to the BBC team that he had first been initiated as a witch at a ceremony in neighbouring Kenya, where a boy of about 13 years was sacrificed. The child was cut on the neck with a knife, and the entire length from the neck down was ripped open. The open part of the boy was placed on Angela. He says that he was told by those who had initiated him that when he returned to Uganda, he was to kill his own son, aged 10.

He says he deceived his wife and made sure that everyone else had gone away and that he was left alone with his child. He then placed the child on the ground, and using a big knife, brought it down like a guillotine.

Asked if he was afraid that he might now be prosecuted as a result of confessing to killing 70 people, he said he had been to all the churches and that they knew him as a warrior in the drive to end witchcraft that involves human sacrifice.

Another practitioner led the team to his secret shrine and said he had clients who regularly captured children and brought their blood and body parts to be consumed by spirits. He said that they were searching for wealth and brought with them the human parts required for the rituals. He revealed that these people captured other people's children for the purpose; that they carry the heart and the blood directly to him to take to the spirits. They carry them in small tins and place them under the tree from which the voices of the spirits are coming.

When he was asked how often clients brought blood and body parts, he said they came on average three times a week, bringing along all that the spirits demanded from them⁶⁴.

In 2011, the BBC embarked on another investigation into the subject.⁶⁵ Their findings revealed that Uganda has experienced a revival of child sacrifice and that ritual killings of children are more common than the Ugandan authorities were admitting. The team also reported that politicians and wealthy, politically-connected businessmen are involved in child sacrifice, which has become a commercial enterprise.

63 Tim Whewell, *Witch-doctors reveal extent of Child sacrifice in Uganda*, BBC, 7/01/2010. Available at www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8441813.stm

64 Ibid

65 Chris Rogers, *Where Child Sacrifice is a Business*, BBC, 11/10/2011. Available at www.bbc.uk/news/world-africa-15255357



That many people believe this practice is fuelled by the country's business elite who pay vast sums of money to practitioners of witchcraft to get more wealth. Chris Rogers the journalist who covered the story travelled to Kyampisi where he met a Pentecostal Preacher, Pastor Peter Ssewakiryanga.

Ssewakiryanga's view was that children become victims of people looking for money. According to him, child sacrifice has become a commercial business.

The journalist also met a young boy in one of the main hospitals in Kampala. A survivor of a child sacrifice ritual, the boy had suffered gross injuries in the form of a cracked skull and brain damage due to a machete cut and was under the care of one Dr. Michael Muhumuza. Disguising himself as a businessman in search of a good luck charm to bless his business, the journalist, together with a colleague, visited a personality involved in the practice of witchcraft. The man was called Awali. He says that Awali invited them into his shrine. He then informed the journalist that the most powerful spell for his request was *"To sacrifice a child"*. He continued, *"There are two ways of doing this. We can bury the child alive on your construction site, or we can cut them in different places and put their blood in a bottle of spiritual medicine."*

Awali grabbed his throat in a demonstration and continued, *"If it's a male, the whole head is cut off and his genitals. We will dig a hole at your construction site, and also bury the feet and the hands and put them all together in the hole."*

Awali boasted he had sacrificed children many times before and knew what he was doing⁶⁶.

The American news broadcaster ABC also investigated the issue. In February 2010, they covered the story in western Uganda of one Asiima Baguma whose 17 months old baby was murdered for ritualistic use by its father, her husband.⁶⁷

Baguma narrated that her son, Nicholas, was murdered, and she found his body in a banana plantation on a remote farm in her village, near the Uganda-Democratic Republic of Congo border.

The journalist followed up on the now-convicted father, Andrew Baguma, in prison. He received approximately 5,000,000 Ugandan shillings from a rich local businessman in exchange for his son's head.

66 Ibid

67 Dana Hughes, *Child Sacrifice Emerges as Disturbing Uganda Trend*, ABC News, February 25 2010. Available at www.abcnews.go.com/2020/child-sacrifice-uganda-witch-doctors-spread-belief/story?id=9930029



In an interview with ABC News from the Ugandan prison, Baguma admitted that he had killed his child. He claimed he wanted the money to set up a business - fixing bicycles. He and a friend of his beheaded Nicholas, dug a shallow grave, and buried his headless body.

Despite the scenario observed above, some practitioners of traditional African belief argue that the practice of child sacrifice is alien in Uganda.

They claim that it came with the Tanzanians whose medicine is far more potent than that of Ugandans.

This position was reported by Youngbee Dale, a freelance journalist and researcher, who wrote her observations in the Washington Times.⁶⁸ She interviewed Mr. Uri Mabiriizi, a practitioner. Mabiriizi revealed that in Uganda, there were no witches sacrificing children, traditionally speaking. That human/child sacrifice was introduced to Uganda recently by witches from other countries such as Tanzania. That Ugandan witches were not extreme enough to perform child sacrifice. They believed that child sacrifice took a witch-doctor with a certain spiritual capacity to be performed. Only Tanzanian witches had the ability to perform child sacrifice and make someone's garden dry in a few days. That Ugandan witches could not do that.

68 Youngbee Dale, *Uganda-Tanzania: Tanzanian Witches Influence Child Sacrifice in Uganda*, Washington Times, November 2, 2011. Available at www.washintontimes.com/neighborhood/rights-so-divine/2011/nov/2/uganda-tanzania-tanzanian-witches-influence-child-



3 CHAPTER THREE

LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Legal Framework

There are several international, regional and national legislations on the rights relevant to protection from child sacrifice. These laws mainly highlight the various rights that can be violated by the act of child sacrifice. The international and regional instruments that are elaborated have been ratified by Uganda. It is important to note, however, that none of the laws cited below recognizes child sacrifice and the acts incidental to it. Therefore, the act of child sacrifice is not specifically criminalized by international, regional and domestic laws.

3.1.1. The International Legal Framework

3.1.1.1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)⁶⁹

At the international level, the UDHR is the fundamental legal instrument for the protection and promotion of human rights. It specifically provides for the right to life, liberty and personal security⁷⁰, and further prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.⁷¹ Though not binding, the UDHR provides the international moral standard for the protection and promotion of human rights.

3.1.1.2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)⁷²

The CRC is the quintessential legal instrument for the protection and promotion of children's rights. The CRC provides for the protection of the rights of children basing on the principle that the primary consideration should be the best interest of the child.⁷³ The CRC provides that States Parties shall recognize that every child has the inherent right to life and that States Parties shall ensure, to the maximum extent possible, the survival and development of the child.⁷⁴ States Parties are

69 Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10th December 1948

70 Ibid. Article 3

71 Ibid. Article 5

72 Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1989. Entered into force on 2nd September 1990 Ratified by Uganda on 17 August 1990.

73 Ibid. Article 3

74 Ibid. Article 6



furthermore under obligation to enact laws that protect children against physical violence. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.⁷⁵ This article is the most precise provision from which to derive Uganda's obligations towards ensuring that acts of child sacrifice are prevented and punished.

3.1.1.3. The Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Prostitution and Child Pornography⁷⁶

The Protocol is instrumental since it contains key provisions that prohibit the *sale* of children.⁷⁷ Evidence of the intricacies of the execution of acts of child sacrifice indicates that the children who are offered for child sacrifice are obtained through exchange of money. The Protocol further defines the sale of children as any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration.⁷⁸

3.1.2. The Regional Legal Framework

3.1.2.1. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)⁷⁹

The ACHPR provides a legal framework for the protection and promotion of human rights in Africa. **Article 1** enjoins all member states to recognize the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in the Charter and to undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect to the rights and freedoms. **Article 4** provides that human beings are inviolable, that every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person and that no one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right.

Therefore, as a state party to the ACHPR, Uganda is mandated to put in place and enforce laws that give effect to the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Charter, including the right to life, and specifically for the purpose of the issue highlighted by this research report, the right for children to be protected from the life-ending act of child sacrifice.

75 Ibid. Article 19(1)

76 Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 May 2000, entered into force on 18 January 2002 and acceded to by Uganda on 30 November 2001

77 Ibid. Article 1

78 Ibid. Article 2(a)

79 Adopted 27 June 1981 by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and entered into force on 21 October 1986. Ratified by Uganda on 10th May 1986.



3.1.2.2. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child⁸⁰

At the regional level, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is at the fore of efforts to specifically protect and promote children's rights. It reiterates the importance of the primary consideration of the best interests of the child as provided for by the international instruments.⁸¹ The Charter underscores the importance of the enjoyment of the right to life by children, and States Parties obligation towards ensuring the enjoyment of this right.⁸² States Parties are specifically mandated to take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment.⁸³ Protective measures shall include effective procedures for the establishment of special monitoring units to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting referral investigation, treatment, and follow-up of instances of child abuse and neglect.⁸⁴ Victims of acts of child sacrifice experience acts of gross torture when they are still alive or before they die.

3.1.3. National Legal Framework

3.1.3.1. The Constitution of Uganda 1995

As the supreme law in Uganda, the Constitution of Uganda 1995 elaborates the importance of the protection and promotion of children's rights. It emphasizes that the family is the natural and basic unit of society and thus, is entitled to protection by society and the State.⁸⁵ Article 20(2) provides that the rights and freedoms of individuals and groups (including children) as enshrined in Chapter Four of the Constitution shall be respected, upheld and promoted by all organs and agencies of government and by all persons. The Constitution expressly prohibits the intentional deprivation of life⁸⁶, and further prohibits acts of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.⁸⁷

3.1.3.2. The Children Act Cap ⁵⁹

The Children Act is a domestication of the aforementioned international and regional instruments, specifically the Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to its preamble, the Children Act was enacted to provide for the care, protection and maintenance of Children.

80 Entered into force on 29 November 1999. Ratified by Uganda on 17 August 1994
81 Ibid. Article 4(1)
82 Ibid. Article 5(1)(2)
83 Ibid. Article 16(1)
84 Ibid. Article 16(2)
85 The Constitution of Uganda 1995, Objective XIX
86 Ibid. Article 22(1)
87 Ibid. Article 24

The Act defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years.⁸⁸ It further provides that any person having custody of a child shall protect the child from violence, abuse and neglect.⁸⁹ The Act emphasizes the obligation of every local government, from the village to the district level, in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within its area.⁹⁰

3.1.3.3. The Penal Code Act 1950

The importance of the Penal Code Act (PCA) is that it specifically provides for the offences of murder⁹¹ and manslaughter⁹², in which categories of offences acts of child sacrifice fall. The PCA further provides for the punishments of life imprisonment for manslaughter⁹³ and the death sentence for murder.⁹⁴

However, the PCA does not provide for child sacrifice as a criminal offence and there is no specific legal provision in the Act that provides for the prosecution of someone found in possession of human body parts such as severed heads, limbs, private parts and blood.

3.1.3.4. The Witch Craft Act 1957

The Witchcraft Act is supposed to be the most relevant legal instrument in the fight to eliminate acts of child sacrifice owing to its criminalization of witchcraft. However, its provisions do not provide comprehensive and specific protection against the phenomenon of child sacrifice. The Act provides for offences and penalties in relation to witchcraft. However, there are no specific provisions for the practice of child sacrifice.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the Act is not ardently enforced to secure convictions that would act as deterrents against witchcraft-related offences.

3.1.3.5. The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009

Under the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, human sacrifice is defined to mean the killing, mutilation, removal of organs or body parts of a person for sale or for the purposes of witchcraft, rituals or any harmful human practices.⁹⁶ However, the law does not specifically define child sacrifice. The law provides for aggravated trafficking in persons, which occurs where the victim is a child⁹⁷, and it also incriminates trafficking of children.⁹⁸ It further provides that a person who removes any part, organ or tissue from the body of a child for purposes of human

88 The Children Act, Cap 59, Section 2

89 Ibid. Section 5(2)

90 Ibid. Section 10(1)(a)

91 The Penal Code Act Cap 120, Section 188

92 Ibid. Section 187

93 Ibid. Section 190

94 Ibid. Section 189

95 The Witchcraft Act Cap 124, Section 2

96 The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009, Section 2(g)

97 Ibid. Section 4(a)

98 Ibid. Section (5)(c)(f)



sacrifice or uses a child or any body part of a child in witchcraft, rituals and related practices commits an offence of aggravated trafficking in children and may be liable to suffer death.

It should be noted that the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act does not make a differentiation of the punishment in instances where the removal of any body part, organ or tissue from the body of the child for purposes of child sacrifice resulted in the death of the child or where it does not result in the death of the child. This means that even in instances where attempts of child sacrifice are foiled and the victim has not died but has been mutilated in an attempt to remove his or her body parts, the alleged perpetrators would still be liable to suffer death if found guilty.

3.2. Institutional Framework

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MOGLSD) is specifically charged with developing policies and monitoring programmes for the protection and promotion of children's rights. The Ministry set up a National Task Force to establish interventions for combating murder and sacrifice of children in Uganda

Furthermore, the National Council for Children (NCC) was established by government to coordinate and monitor all issues pertaining to children. Through the National Council for Children Act,⁹⁹ the NCC is mandated to provide a structure and mechanism which will ensure proper coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes relating to the survival, protection and development of the child.

99 The National Council for Children Act, Cap 60

4

CHAPTER

FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents, discusses and analyses the study findings. It contains six sections, namely; the category of respondents, information on the meaning of child sacrifice as obtained from the different regions visited, the magnitude of the vice, the causes of child sacrifice, samples of the case narratives, and the interventions by key institutions to combat the practice in Uganda. Information presented in the various sections reflects the ideas, suggestions and understanding of the communities and individuals interacted with. The data obtained was analyzed and interpreted to make comparisons, and establish trends, after which conclusions were drawn.

4.1. Categories of respondents

The research study had a sample of eight (8) districts that were selected from the various geographical regions of Uganda. The districts are: Masaka, Rakai and Mukono in Central region; Gulu and Lira in Northern region; Kamuli in Busoga sub- region; Soroti in Eastern region and Hoima in the Western region.

In each of the sample districts, the study targeted the Police, specifically the DPCs, the OC CIDs, and OCs responsible for selected Police Posts. The study also targeted Probation and Social Welfare Officers, Civil Society Organizations, NGOs and Community-Based Organizations (CSO/NGOs/CBOs) dealing in children's rights. It also included the Local Council leaders (LCs), elders in the communities and the communities as an entity, the parents and guardians of kidnapped and sacrificed children, the survivors of child sacrifice, as well as motor-cycle transporters popularly known as "boda-boda".

The research incorporated all children who have fallen victims to the vice; those killed in the practice and those who survived.

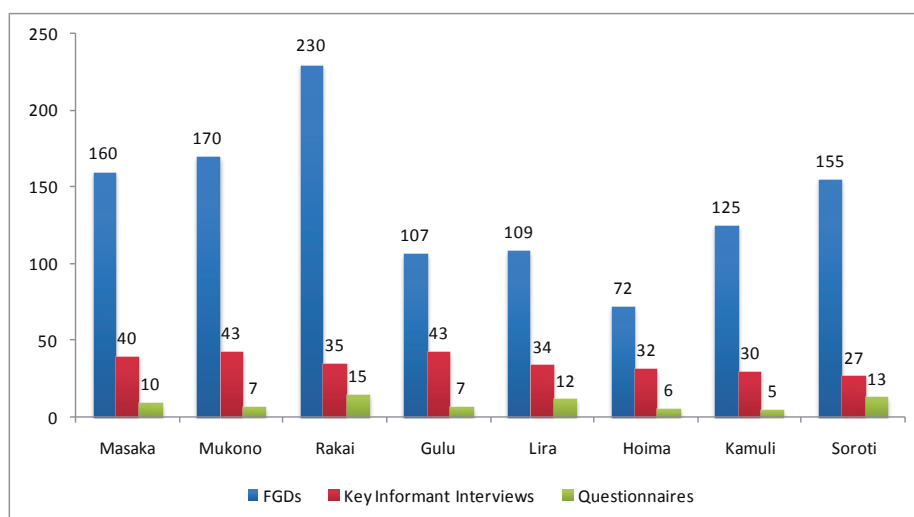
Information was obtained from the subjects of the study through in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), questionnaires, observation, case studies and document analysis.



The study interviewed adults and children of different age groups. The number of respondents varied from one district to another, depending on the incidences of child sacrifice that had occurred in their communities or the information they had in regard to the matter. A total of 1451 adults (63% female and 37% male) and 36 children (39% female and 61% male) participated in the study.

The graph below shows the number of respondents in the study districts using the aforementioned sampling methods.

Graph1. Number of respondents engaged through the different methods



Source: primary data

The graph above indicates that there were more respondents from the districts of Masaka, Rakai, and Mukono in the central region, followed by Kamuli and Soroti in the Eastern region. This was because these districts had the highest number of child sacrifice and attempted ritual murder compared to the districts in the northern and western regions.

It should, however, also be noted that the large proportion of respondents being from central districts of Masaka, Rakai and Mukono was mainly due to the large population of those districts, totaling to 1,187,700 (41%), out of the total population of 2,886,700 for all the eight sampled districts. It was also observed that the three districts of Masaka, Rakai and Mukono have a diversity of tribes that have different cultural practices and beliefs. Of all the respondents interacted with through FGDs, one-on-one interviews and questionnaires, 60% were people staying in settlement places such as landing sites, tea estates and police barracks. 35% were respondents in charge of children's affairs working with CSOs, local leaders and Police. 5% were respondents from scattered household communities.

Figure 1: Conducting an Interview with Key Informants

A researcher (right) conducting an interview with the parents of a victim of child sacrifice in Kamuli district

4.2. The Meaning and Understanding of Ritual Sacrifice

During the FGDs and interviews with the respondents from the Central, Northern, Eastern and Western regions in Uganda, there was a common response obtained concerning their understanding and meaning of the term ritual sacrifice.

The respondents interviewed in the communities accepted that offering sacrifice has been practiced for ages since the days of their ancestors and it is highly respected. It was observed that the rituals of sacrifice are carried out differently depending on the culture and purpose for sacrificing, and therefore different items were offered.

One respondent noted that;

“Our grandparents treasured the ritual of sacrifice to which extra attention and respect was attached. Animals like cows, goats, and sheep and sometimes birds like chicken and, doves were killed and their blood sprinkled on a sick person and all around the place of the event in order to appease the spirits to cure the patient. Another example is during the construction of houses, they would kill either an animal or a bird and pour the blood in the foundation as a prerequisite for the gods to bless the new home” (Participant FGD, Kachanga Landing site, Masaka).



This was further emphasized in different regions where respondents reiterated that the practice of sacrifice was part of their cultures, but that the practice never targeted human beings as sacrifices. For example; some respondents from Lira district stated that;

“Offering sacrifice was and is still practiced in our culture but only animals and birds are sacrificed to appease the gods and to be able to get what we want. It is usually carried out in the presence of all family and clan members but not in isolation. We have never thought that even human beings can be offered for sacrifice because gods and spirits do not demand for them. It is unacceptable in the Lango culture”. (Community’s FGD, Lira)

The study revealed that although many of the respondents knew of sacrifice in their own cultural practices, they were surprised about the practice of child sacrifice and were not certain of its root cause. They argued that it was a new practice fueled by the rich and foreign witch-doctors. During a FGD in Rakai, a respondent stated that;

“The wealthy people from Kampala connive with the locals here and kidnap our children since they know we are poor and therefore cannot run after them even when it comes to applying the law. Our own people in the village, who are given money or promised big rewards, trick the innocent children with small gifts and later they surrender the children to their ‘bosses’ who offer them as sacrifices to their gods. Such arrangements are normally done following promises of rewards like money, land or employment opportunities to the kidnapper”

The true traditional healers have always distinguished their activities by applying their indigenous cultural knowledge and making use of traditional healing plants to come up with traditional healing medicine.

The community members interacted with reported that there was no problem or situation that would propel a true traditional healer to sacrifice a human being in the quest for healing or providing any other kind of help.¹⁰⁰ Community leaders and members emphasized that human sacrifice is a new phenomenon and it is not a practice well known in their ritual dimensions or form of traditional worship.¹⁰¹

This implies that whoever takes part in sacrificing human beings, particularly children, is not a true traditional doctor but someone who is out to take advantage of people who are desperate and ignorant about the appropriate requirements for the help they are seeking.

100 Focus Group discussion, Rakai district

101 FGDs from the sampled districts and CSO key informants

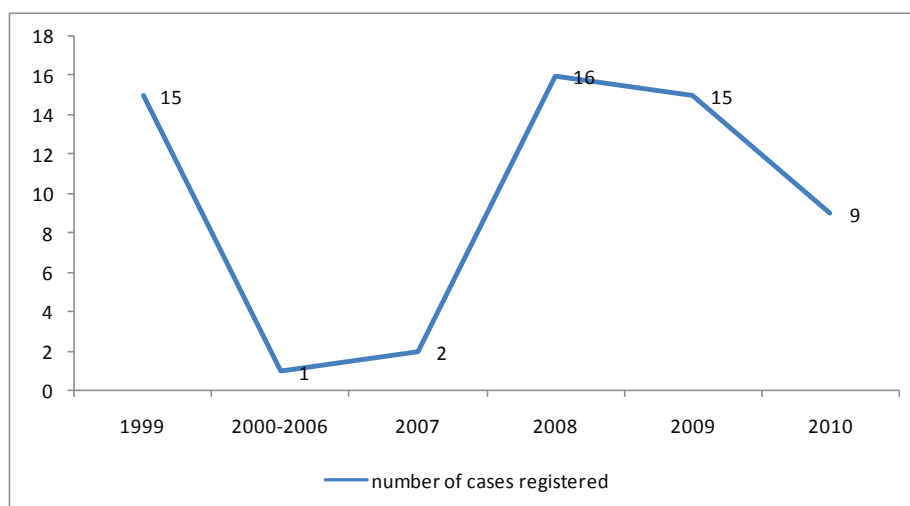


4.3. Magnitude of the Phenomenon of Child Sacrifice

This section presents information on the trends of the practice of child sacrifice at National level and within the districts visited. This information was integrated with key informants' views and used to draw conclusions.

A Line Graph showing the trend of child sacrifice cases in Uganda during the period 1999- 2010.

Graph 2: Trends of Child Sacrifice cases in the Period 1999-2010



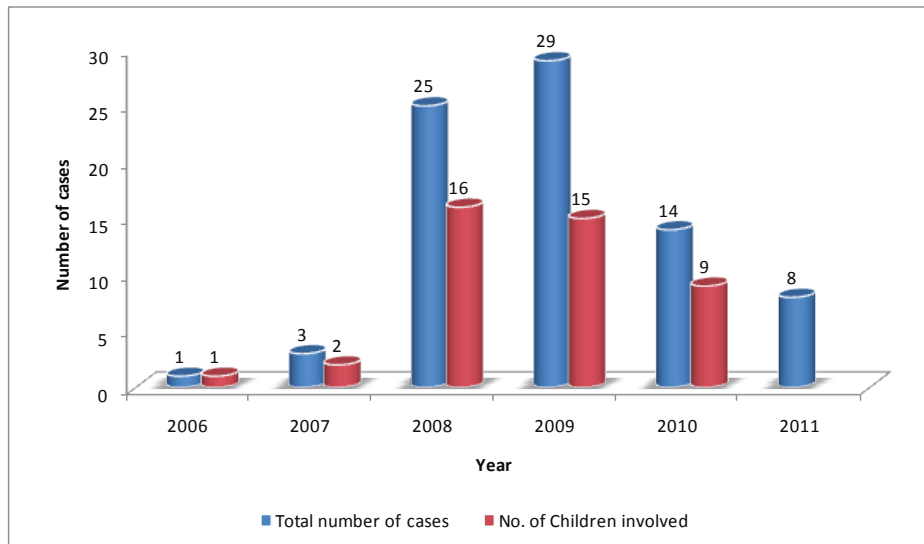
Source; *Primary data*

There was an increase in the number of cases between 2007 and 2009, attributed to the ignorance about the phenomenon. Police officers interacted with reported that people lacked vigilance and knowledge about the act, giving the perpetrators lee way to conduct their acts with little fear.

According to the Uganda Police Report of 2010, the cases reduced to nine (9), which was attributed to the increased vigilance by the Police, media/press, concerned NGOs, Religious Leaders, Senior Government Officials and members of the public.



Graph 3: The distribution of ritual sacrifice cases and the number of child victims in selected years..



Source: Uganda Police Annual Report 2009 and 2010.

4.3.1. Age Preference of Kidnapped and Sacrificed Children

Although all children are at risk of ritual killing (sacrifice), respondents observed that the kidnappers and ritual killers mainly targeted children in the lower age group. Table 2 shows the age brackets of children who are most affected.

Table 2: Age bracket of children most affected by child sacrifice

Age group	Male	Female
14 - 17	00	03
11 - 13	02	02
7 - 10	03	02
4 - 6	04	03
0 - 3	16	05

Source: Primary data from the Police stations/posts in the sampled districts

The study revealed that children who are in their early childhood years (0-3 and 4-6 years) were the most vulnerable to acts of ritual killing. This was because such children are easily carried away with little or no resistance by the perpetrators. They easily accept the small gifts given to them or are gullible to the lies they are told; providing a conducive environment for kidnappers.



It was also established that children within the age bracket of 0-10 years are perceived to be clean and free from sin and are therefore treasured by the “gods”. The study revealed being *clean* and *free from sin* are prerequisites given by the witchdoctors for the ideal sacrificial offering.¹⁰²

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4.3.2. Gender Preference of Kidnapped and Sacrificed Children

The study revealed that although victims of child sacrifice belonged to both genders it was more prevalent among boys. From the districts visited, the cases of boys, consisting of 62.5% who were reported to have been kidnapped and or killed for ritual purposes, outnumbered the cases that involved girls which was 37.5%. It was stated that boys fall prey to the kidnappers because they are easily tricked and are traditionally more treasured than girls.¹⁰⁴ It was also noted that the boys’ organs are easily cut off to be delivered for ritual purposes which is not as easy for the female children.¹⁰⁵

It was further stated that;

“Boys have mostly been targeted since the witch-doctors normally demand for sexual organs in addition to other body parts of these children. The kidnappers automatically look for the simplest way to acquire such parts and as such seek out boys who, unlike girls, have outer sexual organs. In addition to that, by nature boys get easily duped by people, who in some cases are those living within the homestead, and easily follow them without question. This is uncharacteristic amongst girls who usually have no interest in hanging around without their mothers or on their own. This characteristic has thus made boys more vulnerable to kidnap, resulting in them being killed under such gruesome circumstances”.¹⁰⁶

102 FGD, Lira & Masaka districts

103 FGD, Lira & Masaka districts

104 FGD Rakai district

105 Ibid

106 Ibid



Figure 3: Show Boys who survived being sacrificed



Figure 2: Oscar Rachkara, 11-years from Pece-Lukaung

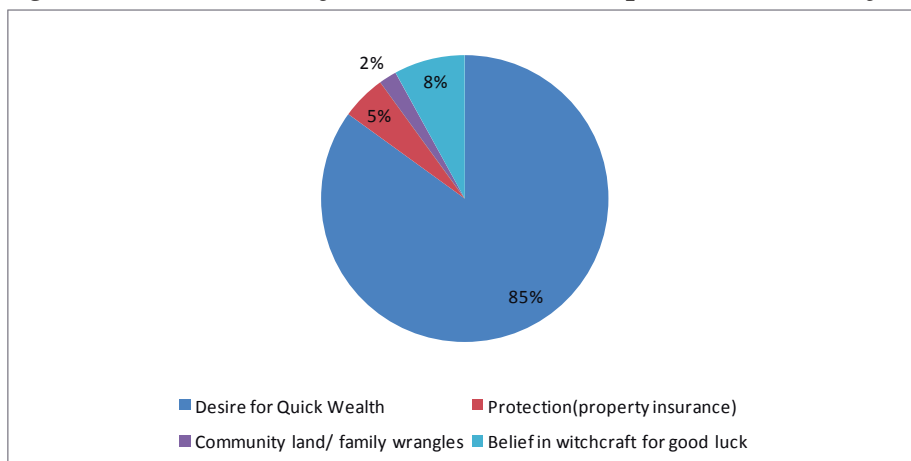


Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 show Boys who survived being sacrificed; Patrick Ziraba 3-years (left) with his mother in Akuja-Olepu village, Kyere sub-county, Serere district. On the right is Oscar Rachkara, 11-years from Pece-Lukaung, Laro division, Gulu municipality, Gulu district

4.4. The Causes of Child Sacrifice

The study revealed that a number of causes, ranging from economic, social and cultural factors, have sparked and sustained child sacrifice in Uganda. Specific factors were identified to have caused and created an enabling environment for the practice of child sacrifice among societies. These include the desire for quick wealth, poverty, family wrangles, and belief in witchcraft.

The specific factors which were said to have been spearheaded or influenced by the rich or middle income class included the desire for quick wealth and protection of property from misfortunes. Other factors were revealed to have created an enabling environment to sustain the practice among communities. These factors mainly pushed the poor into practicing or engaging in the processes of child sacrifice.

Figure 4: Factors that facilitate child kidnap and child sacrifice.

Source: Primary data

It was revealed that greed for quick wealth is the core factor that has influenced the practice of sacrificing human beings especially children. Respondents agreed that most of the people who have been implicated in the ritual practice, particularly the rich, have done it with the goal of acquiring quick wealth. This was inter-related with the belief that human blood and/or body parts offered to the spirits can be used to mix charms for solving different problems such as sickness, strained relationships, family wrangles and for providing protection for one's property.

4.4.1. Desire for Quick Wealth

It was indicated that the witch-doctors who are consulted advise their clients to sacrifice human beings so that the spirits will be pleased and grant them the wealth they need. It was stated that;

“It is mostly the people from towns who want to get rich quickly because they rely on rumours that the rich people in the neighbourhood could have sacrificed human beings to gain riches. Hearing this, those people also desperately run to the witch-doctors for consultations and end up giving in to whatever they are asked for, including offering children as human sacrifice. Initially, they spend a lot of money; selling off their property to meet the demands of witch-doctors. With time, they become more determined to give in to everything they are asked to do, and this eventually ends up with them agreeing to offer children as sacrifices to the spirits” (LC 1 chairperson, Namirembe landing site, Masaka).



People in so many societies in Uganda believe they earn respect when they have money; that they can do anything with ease as long as they have money. This perception has driven people into resorting to all kinds of methods of becoming rich so that they can be recognized in their societies.¹⁰⁷

The subjects of the study in Mukono and Soroti districts expressed their exasperation over the way people today have attached more value to wealth than life. They blamed it on the corrupt environment people live in today and stated that:

“It is only the wealthy that live a better life and access what they want at any time. The high value of wealth by individuals has made people carry out child sacrifice so that they can attain quick riches.” (FGDs in Mukono, Kisoga village, and Soroti district)

A key informant further noted that:

It is the rich that live life today with ease because they can afford to buy their way into each and everything they need. So some individuals, even when they can live a moderate lifestyle, keep admiring the rich ones and therefore use all means to amass wealth and to sustain it, thus indulging in sacrificing children. (Programme Coordinator, Child Fund-Lira district)

The fake witch-doctors were also massively embracing the practice since they knew people who go with a belief of getting riches from the spirits would give them money in return.¹⁰⁸ It was discovered that witch-doctors extract a lot of money from their clients as they claim to be working on their issues compelling them to pay for services according to the magnitude of the problem. This explains why there are more fake witch-doctors masquerading as traditional healers when in fact they have no knowledge of traditional medicine. These fake witch-doctors consequently end up asking their clients to offer human sacrifices, knowing well that it is difficult to fulfil. Unfortunately because the clients are desperate, they end up picking either their own children or those from the community to be offered as sacrifices in order to appease the gods.¹⁰⁹

This was further confirmed by members in the communities who stated that:

“So many people are masquerading as witch-doctors believing that they can get rich quickly and that they can also offer wealth to those who need it. These witch-doctors get as much money as they want within the short time because they get it from people who visit them and are willing to pay whatever amount is asked for. That is why many witch-doctors in Uganda, and others coming from the neighbouring countries like Tanzania and Congo, operate as ‘traditional healers’.

107 Mr. Charles Bulonge Mukasa, LC. 3 Chairperson, Kabonera Sub-county, Masaka district

108 ACP Binoga Moses, Head of the Anti-Human Sacrifice & Trafficking Task Force, 2010.

109 ibid



These fake witch-doctors attract Ugandans to join the practice even when they do not know what traditional healing entails, thus ending up engaging in practices like child sacrifice” (participant, FGD Rakai).

It has therefore come to be understood that the practice of traditional healing has become a lucrative business that has made the practitioners earn quick wealth from their clients, most of whom are the rich. It is through such disguises that people have fuelled the practice of child sacrifice with claims of pleasing the spirits.

4.4.2. Poverty

Poverty was another factor identified as a cause of child sacrifice. This mostly affects the people in rural areas and slums where there are minimal chances of enjoying a reasonable standard of living. The study revealed that 100% of the people who actually kidnap children for sacrifice are poor people who are usually given money in return. Neighbours, relatives and sometimes parents to the children engage with rich people who are not known to other community members in transactions involving their children. Due to poverty, some parents have been compelled to entrust their children to strangers, friends or relatives, who end up giving them in for sacrifice.

When interviewed, the District Police Commander (DPC) Rakai highlighted a case of a girl who was kidnapped by the neighbour, who then transferred her to his relatives in a different village. He commented that; *“During the case, it became apparent that it was with the authorization of her parents that the girl was left in the hands of kidnappers. They said their daughter was to be left with those strangers since they (her parents) had no money to take care of her. This scenario left the child’s life in danger of various forms of abuse.”*

Similarly, in all the districts studied, child sacrifice has affected children from disadvantaged and poverty-stricken families. Parents, guardians, or relatives to the children who have fallen victims to the practice of child sacrifice and kidnap were found to have been trapped in a poverty cycle with little or no hope of living a better life. Such conditions may have contributed to their decision to sell the children; conniving with the rich who sacrifice these children in the hope of attaining a better life.

4.4.3. Protection of property

People in Uganda desperately guard what they have achieved with the application of all forms of protection and insurance. Whereas some people believe in entrusting their property and assets with insurance institutions, others have resorted to offering sacrifices for protection and prosperity. Participants alleged that some people, especially those owning assets like buildings (commercial plazas, factories etc) bury people beneath the construction sites. It was claimed this is done in an



attempt to protect the property from losses and calamities, and to attract blessings from the gods. This factor was claimed to have sustained the practice of child sacrifice as there are more people setting up buildings and undertaking construction projects of roads, dams, water sources and others.

4.4.4. Belief in Witchcraft and spiritual supernatural powers

It was observed that some people have embedded their beliefs in supernatural powers and have therefore resorted to witchcraft practices to meet their needs.

Respondents noted that *“Some people have gods and spirits that they believe in for good luck, blessings, wealth and protection in their day today lives. As such, they grant them respect and obedience, including giving them periodical sacrifices which may result in children falling victims as is the case with these increased cases of child sacrifice”*. (FGD, Masaka).

In some cases, desperate ritualists invade cemeteries and exhume dead bodies for ritual purposes. For instance, during the study, a guardian to one of the victims of child sacrifice in Masaka district mentioned that; *“ Two people, unknown to us as village members, were found at my grandson’s grave trying to mix charms and dig a hole at the corner of the grave to fix in their charms. When questioned, they claimed that they wanted to stop the ‘spirit’ of the dead from haunting any one. In reality, they wanted to get some body parts for their ritual purposes. Fortunately, we called for Police’s intervention early and they were arrested”*.¹¹⁰

Beliefs in super natural powers were also reported to have penetrated the mainstream religious dominions with people disguising as believers or prophets yet they were indulging in practices like witchcraft and consultation of spirits. One key informant reported that;

“It has been realized that there are so many people who have disguised as religious but at the same time believe in witchcraft and demonic powers for various benefits like future fortune, job security and good health. Such people have become obsessed with their beliefs and are therefore easily manipulated by the fake traditional healers (‘bafere’) who drive them to giving in to their dreadful demands like sacrificing human beings especially children”.¹¹¹

4.4.5. Trickery and exploitation by witch-doctors.

The study revealed that almost all the cases of child sacrifice and kidnap have had a witch-doctor involved in the process. The fact that there are no formal laws regulating traditional healers in Uganda has provided an ideal environment for the proliferation of their activities, including

110 Key Informant, Grandfather of a victim (Joseph Kasirye), of Masaka district

111 Moses Binoga, The Head of the Anti-human Sacrifice And Trafficking Task Force



those of the fake ones. This has been due to the increasing demand for their services by the desperate people who consult them at different occasions. It is also influenced by the tough economic conditions and high costs of living that have paved way for conmen and fake witch-doctors who take advantage of ignorant and desperate people searching for solutions to their problems.

Respondents expressed concern about the unregulated practices of traditional healing and noted that this has left a big gap for exploitation by witch-doctors. They noted that; *“After extorting lump sums of money or even property, witch-doctors usually end up having no explanation for their failure to resolve their clients’ problems and therefore end up tricking them into doing inhumane acts like killing children to offer as sacrifice. In fact, such demands are made by the witch-doctors in order to get themselves out of hard situations that they could not solve in the very beginning”*.¹¹²

ACP, Moses Binoga further confirmed noting that; *“The fake traditional healers and herbalists (‘bafere’) usually extort exorbitant amounts of money from their victims and then end up demanding for human body parts in a bid to scare them off. The persistence of the clients eventually leads them to being tricked and misled by the witch-doctors into offering human blood and body parts to the spirits. Sometimes the traditional healers resort to killing their clients in case of forecasted danger to their own lives”*.¹¹³

However, traditional healers and herbalists interviewed during the study denied taking part in such acts and instead blamed it on the fake practitioners who disguise themselves as genuine traditional healers to acquire quick money.¹¹⁴ According to one traditional healer in Kamuli, *“Our role is to treat the sick but not to kill. The problem is that some people visit witch-doctors/traditional healers and ask them to give solutions that are absolutely impossible to get. The witch-doctors/traditional healers, for fear of being despised or labeled incompetent, trick clients by making ‘impossible’ demands, like sacrificing human beings or offering human body parts, to which the ignorant clients comply. This leads to the prevailing acts of child sacrifice”*.

4.4.6. Negligence of parents/guardians and the Community;

It was observed that due to negligence by parents or guardians in some communities, the chances of children being kidnapped and sacrificed are heightened. Furthermore, it was noted that today the welfare and security of a child is the sole responsibility of the parents or guardians and that communities no longer play a prominent role in

112 FGD, Mutukula, Rakai district

113 Ibid (26)

114 Mr. Mukonjo, A traditional healer in Hoima district.



ensuring children's security as it was in the past. Children are left to move around without close and diligent monitoring by their parents or communities. Individuals with ill intent have taken advantage of this laxity in communities to lure and kidnap unsuspecting children, which children are eventually sacrificed.

4.5. Case Narrative Samples

4.5.1. Case I

Respondent: *Mr. Matia Mulondo, grandfather of a victim of child sacrifice*

Name of the Victim: *Joseph Kasirye, 12 years*

Residence: *Kayugi village, Mukungwe sub-county, Masaka district*

"It was the evening of 27th October 2008 when my neighbor Umar Kateregga paid a visit to my home. Kateregga, a witch-doctor, was not born in this village but was operating a shrine in the neighborhood. He had lived in this village for a few years and overtime was acquainted with us, especially with my grandson Joseph Kasirye. During the visit, Kateregga spoke with Kasirye and asked him for drinking water before he left. Shortly after, Kasirye picked a ten liter jerry can and went to fetch water. It started getting dark but Kasirye wasn't returning home which worried us. I asked the people who were with me at home to start searching for him around the whole village but in vain. We approached Kateregga and asked him if he knew where Kasirye had gone to which he responded that he had no idea. Later in the night, we realized that we couldn't go on with the search and hoped Kasirye would come back home the next day. By early the following morning, almost all village members had heard about the disappearance of Kasirye and had joined us in the search. Kasirye's father, Joseph Mugwanya who lives in Luvule in Mukungwe the nearby village, was also informed of the matter. That same morning, residents spotted Kateregga and his wife Mariam Nabukeera carrying a bag; they seemed like they were running away from something. They were stopped and taken to the LC1 chairperson, Mr. Gerald Matovu. The LC Chairperson then reported the matter to Kako Police and a Police Officer, Charles Ssebwana, was dispatched. Meanwhile, the residents had already begun to beat up the couple demanding information on the whereabouts of Kasirye. The couple was saved by the Police Officer who took them to Kako Police post from where they were transferred to Masaka Central Police Station. At the Police station, Kateregga and Nabukeera were interrogated about the matter. Kateregga at first confessed to having taken Kasirye and given him to a rich man who had asked him for a boy to work as a house-help in his poultry projects. During further interrogation, Kateregga's wife Nabukeera revealed that Kasirye had been killed and his private parts, the umbilical cord and head were cut off and handed over to a business man called Kato Kajubi, at a fee. She



explained further that the body was dumped in the swamp to which they directed the police. The Police, with us in tow, went to the swamp and discovered a body wrapped in a black polythene material stacked in a polythene sack. We were asked to examine the body which we identified was that of Kasirye from his feet, and the clothes he was wearing. We realized that the genitals, the umbilical cord and the head were missing. The Police took the body and carried out a postmortem after which we were allowed to take the body for burial. The search at the home of Kateregga continued and the 10 liter jerry can Kasirye had carried to the well was discovered, as were blood stains and the car tyre marks of the alleged car that Kajubi used on the night of Kasirye's murder. Kateregga and his wife remained in Police custody and Kato Kajubi was later arrested following the allegations of his accomplices. We buried a headless body, an event that has remained our nightmare since then. I believe that my grandson's body parts were taken for ritual purposes since Kateregga was a witchdoctor who could have been conducting illegal activities in this village. I hope that justice will be served and the culprits convicted for the gruesome crime they committed"

Figure 5: the grave of the victim



Figure 6: grandfather to the victim



The grave (left) of Joseph Kasirye who was a victim of ritual murder and on the right is the grandfather of the victim Mr. Matia Mulondo of Kayugi, Masaka district

4.5.2. Case II**Respondent: Mr. David Abonga, father of a victim of child sacrifice****Name of the victim: Moses Ogenrwot – 1 year and 4 months****Residence: Paduy-Paromo Village, Awach Sub-county, Aswa County, Gulu district**

“On the fateful day of 14th April 2009, at around mid-day, my wife had gone to the well to collect water and I decided to take the cows to the nearby shrub for grazing. I left my son who was 1 year and four months old, my daughter of 3 years and their 5 year old cousin playing under a mango tree, approximately 50metres away from our home. After a few minutes, Adong, a girl of 15 years from our immediate neighborhood came and attempted to lure the young ones into the bush to look for palm fruits that were often picked and eaten by the children. Initially, the young one declined to go with her and she instead went and picked some fruits by herself which she gave the little ones to eat. She later asked that they go back and pick more and this time they went with her. On returning, the two young girls were without their brother Moses. On their mother’s return from the well, she found the young boy was missing. She got angry at the sisters and caned them demanding to know the whereabouts of their brother. They could not say anything since they didn’t know and were scared. The grandfather of the children and their uncle who had been up on a tree collecting mangoes had seen Adong going with the children to the direction of her home but the boy did not come back. After some time, the sister told us that they had left Moses eating fish given to him by Adong’s father. After searching around our home together with the mother, uncle and grandfather of the boy, we went to Adong’s home and questioned her father about the whereabouts of Moses. He denied knowing anything. At around 5.00 pm, we went to Police and reported the disappearance of our son. The police advised us to continue the search. The next day, Moses was still missing; Police came and contacted our LC 1 chairperson who mobilized the village people and we continued the search throughout the whole village. However, we noticed that all the members of Adong’s family were missing. They had disappeared and did not participate in the search yet they are our immediate neighbors and more so our relatives. It seemed strange to everyone and we started suspecting them to have kidnapped our son. After a thorough search all over the village, the body was found dumped in a bush 300 meters away from home, with one eye, the lips, and part of the tongue cut off, and the body half burnt. A search of the neighbor’s house was conducted where a machete and a knife with blood, and a rope, which must have been used to kill the boy, were discovered.”



Figure 7: The Family of the Victim**Figure 8: the Grave of the Victim**

(Left) Family of the victim; Moses Ogenrwot – 1 year and 4 months from Paduy-Paromo Village, Awach Sub-county, Aswa County, Gulu district. (Right) the grave of Moses Ogenrwot who was sacrificed.

4.5.3. Case III

Respondent: *Pastor Santos Labeja, father of a victim and the Founder of Gideon Foundation that campaigns for the end of the practice of child sacrifice*

Name of the victim: *Gideon Smith Lubangakene, 4 years old*

Residence: *Nakatunya ward, western division, Soroti town, Soroti district*

“On the fateful day of 19th December in 2006, Gideon Smith Lubangakene was playing with other children under the mango tree in a school compound in the homestead. He was later lured with a musical card by one of the neighborhood boys, a 19 year-old called Ojara. Ojara was living in the nearby Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp with one of the families that had settled on the land I had offered them during the period of the rebel insurgency. As Ojara was enticing Gideon to his hut saying he would give him the musical card if he went with him, there were two other boys of seven(7) and eight(8)years old following Ojara as they also wanted the card. On reaching the hut, Ojara forced Gideon inside and half closed the door leaving the two boys outside peeping.



They saw him squeezing Gideon's neck and the little boy was screaming and crying. They came running and informed a girl, one of Ojara's family members, who reproached them from telling anyone else. The girl went and informed their grandfather who was playing a game of cards with other men in the school compound. The grandfather rushed to the hut and found Gideon's body pushed under the bed. He cleaned the body with a shirt and laid it on the bed covering it to make it appear as if Gideon was just sleeping. The body had its tongue stuck out as if they were trying to cut it out. The old man grabbed Ojara and ordered him to sit on the boda-boda that took them straight to police to save him from the mob that had already gathered, armed with machetes and stones. I reached home in the evening from Kampala and found Gideon already dead. Now in Police custody, Ojara confessed that he had been trained to go underground through water as a process for him to acquire quick wealth. He therefore had to perform certain rituals like offer human body parts and blood to the gods so that he could be successful. He claimed he had been advised by his trainers to kill one of his parents and in that attempt he had set his father's house ablaze. Fortunately his father had left earlier without Ojara noticing. When his first plan failed, he decided to kill anyone in order to appease his spirits. Afterwards, Ojara was released and referred to a remand home in Mbale when his mother claimed that he was below 18 years of age, a minor. The last I heard was that Ojara escaped from the remand home and is still at large."

4.5.4. Case IV

Respondent: Ms. Dinah Asano, grandmother to a victim narrates the story

Name of the victim: Onyige, 4 years

Residence: Aukot-Ariety Village, Aukot Parish, Gweri Sub-county, Soroti district.

"It was on Christmas day in 2006 when Onyige my grandson was carried away and killed. He had come for the Christmas holidays and on that fateful day he and his uncle Justin Okwi went for prayers at Opur Church of Uganda. His uncle entered the church for prayers but Onyige remained outside with other children playing. After the service, Okwi came home knowing that one of the family members had come back with Onyige since he had asked around at church and had been told that the boy had followed his auntie. To our surprise, Onyige's auntie informed us that she had not seen him anywhere that day. We then started searching around for him in all the likely places we thought he could have gone to in the whole village but did not find him. We later reported the matter to the LC who also informed the Police. The next day on 26th December, a village meeting was convened and it was attended by all the village members. During that meeting, some members who were at church recalled having seen Moses Ochepa carrying a child but did not know what his motive was. With him there were other men; William Ewatu, a resident of our village,



and William Eusu Arugut from Okole village, our immediate neighboring village. The police arrested the three men as suspects and they were later remanded in prison. In early 2007, the suspects were released by court due to insufficient evidence. It was later in March 2010, during the dry season, that remains of a child (bones without a skull) were discovered in a sack in Achola harbor (at the nearby swamp). The suspects were then re-arrested and they confessed to having sold off the boy but did not kill him. It is alleged that the boy was sacrificed since these people (suspects) used to brag at their drinking joints about their other means of acquiring wealth.”

4.5.5. Case V

Respondent: Mr. Odong John Baptist, father of a victim

Name of the Victim: Immaculate Auma

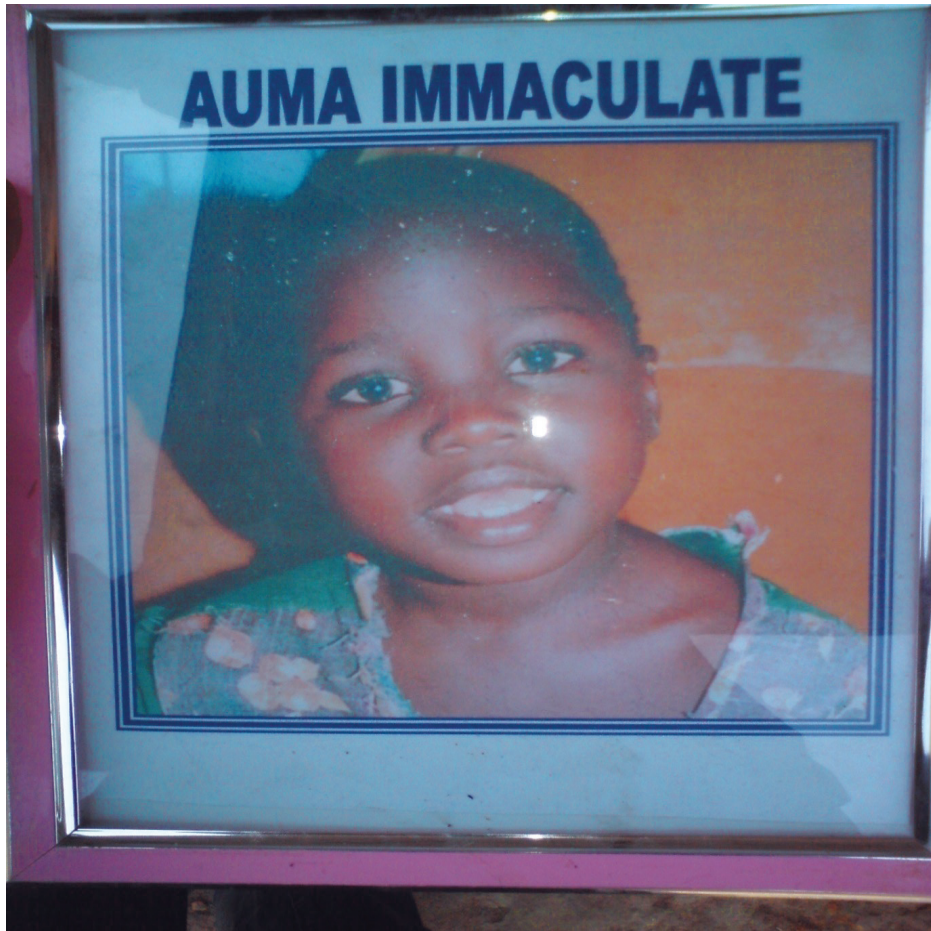
Residence: Acoke village, Olaro Kwon parish, Adwari sub-county, Lira district

“5 year-old Immaculate Auma had come home for holidays since she doesn’t live with us during the school going period. It was 18th December, 2008 when as usual she went to the garden with her mother and her 7 year old sister. As the mother (Jacinta Angom) was going on with her digging, she sent the two girls to collect some drinking water for her at a nearby home that was 100 meters away from the garden. Along the way, Auma decided to go back to her mother and left her sister to continue and collect water. Auma’s sister came back with the water but Auma was missing. The mother started searching around but didn’t find her. At the home where the girls had been sent to collect water, the mother reported that on that morning there had been two men (Alfred Otim and his friend who had just come to visit) at the home but during the search for Auma, they were gone. We reported the matter to police and the village members were all notified of the incidence. Although Alfred Otim is a close relative, he never appeared during the search and only came back after some days had passed. The child went missing but later on 12th February, 2010 Auma’s remains, in the clothes she was wearing on that fateful day, were discovered by the well in the nearby village. Investigations and a postmortem were done and it was reported that the girl’s blood had been collected in the process of her murder. Alfred Otim was later arrested as a suspect and he reported that his friend, who was also his former colleague in Anti- Stock Theft Unit (ASTU), was coming from Agago district. Otim’s family members reported that he used to bring in unknown visitors and hide them in a small hut and it seemed like the men had motives which were unknown. Otim was released after six months and I was notified file number crb/474/2009 of the murder of my daughter had gone missing. Therefore, I had no other way to follow up the case. Otim’s relatives started threatening my family and they promised to cause more death to my family in case Otim was to be convicted of such allegations. I decided to leave the village with my family and we relocated here where



we are renting a small house. Such an incident has affected my other children who live in fear of being killed that they don't even want to go to school"

Figure 9: Photo of the victim in Lira district



Immaculate Auma 5years of Acoke village, Olaro Kwon parish, Adwari sub-county, Lira district

4.5.6. Case VI

Respondent: Mr. Vincent Oyel, father of victim
Name of the Victim: Benedict Oyel, 3years and 5 months old

Residence: Okello village, Angeta parish Olilim Sub-county, Lira district

"On that fateful day 9th December, 2008, Benedict Oyel and two of his siblings left Ngetta ginnery in Lira municipality together with their mother Ziliant Abeja and went to the village for Christmas holidays. There were

celebrations at the nearby missionary school which they proceeded to attend with other ladies from the village. After the party (at around 7.00pm), the children proceeded to their grandmother's home which was about 300 meters from their home village. However, Benedict never reached his grandmother's home. Instead, he stopped at the home of a cousin who used to live with them in Lira town before he was sent back to the village after having misunderstanding with Benedict's father. Shortly thereafter, Benedict's brothers came back from their grandmother's home and went to their cousin's place where they found Benedict playing with his 17 year-old cousin. The brothers left for home and when they reached, their mother asked for Benedict who then ordered them to go back and bring him along with them so that they could bathe. On reaching the cousin's home, they inquired about Benedict's whereabouts but were told that he had left for home to his mother. A thorough search was conducted that night but the boy could not be traced. The next day, we reported to Police but they didn't act. Nevertheless, in the company of our village mates, we continued with the search and discovered the foot marks of a child. These footmarks led us to Odite swamp in Okello village bordering Olilim sub-county and Orum sub-county. We looked for Benedict but in vain. It was later on 5th January 2009 when a herdsman who was grazing cattle came with Benedict's cousin (the one he was playing with shortly before his disappearance) and reported to me that they had discovered remains (the skull and other remains that were scattered away from the skull) of a child lying in the swamp. Together with other village members, we proceeded to the scene and I was able to identify that it was my son from the gap he had in his teeth. We gathered the remains and took them for burial. I really feel the Police did not do its work early enough to find whoever was involved in the murder of my son. This has affected our family as there is a lot of disunity after we had reported Benedict's cousin as a suspect."

4.5.7. Case VII

Respondent: Mr. Franco Wakubuna, father of victim

Name of the victim: Clevus Bitumwa, 2 ½ years

Residence: Salama-Luberenga camp, Kisoga village, Ntenjeru sub-country, Mukono district.

"It was Thursday 11th November, 2010 when we went with my wife to the tea plantation to proceed with our daily routine. We had left Clevus sleeping since it was still too early to wake him up and go with him. Later that morning, he joined other children living in the camp to play. On coming back we found the boy missing and when we asked around they told us he had followed his friends to the well. I went to the well but did not find him. We started searching the whole camp and in the plantations, all in vain. In the evening we reported the matter to Police which came the next day. We continued with the search but we couldn't find him. On Monday 15th November, 2010 the body was found by a herdsman in the



nearby tree plantation. Body parts like the tongue, the private parts, the lower jaw and the eyes were missing and the stomach had been cut open with intestines hanging out. The Police intervened and investigations began. There were no arrests made and we have never known who killed our son.”

Figure 10: Interview with the Parents of the Victims



Figure 11: The place where the body was found



Researchers interviewing the victim's parents (Right) The said tree plantation in **Salama-Luberenga camp, Kisoga village** where the body of **Clevus Bitumwa** was discovered.

4.6. Responses from the Stakeholders and Communities on Promoting and Protecting Children's Rights.

During the study, researchers interacted with different stakeholders/NGOs established in the sampled districts that are working to ensure the protection and promotion of children's rights.

From the discussions held, respondents in the organizations (at district and local community level) confirmed that they had heard about acts of child sacrifice. Some of the cases were in their areas of jurisdiction and others in the nearby districts.

Through the activities of promoting and protecting children's rights, the respondents noted that they have mostly received complaints of child abuse, domestic violence and negligence.

They noted that the acts of child sacrifice have been intensified by the greed for money within the society and unregulated migration into the country which is not helped by the inadequate laws, policies and

mechanisms for regulating the activities of traditional healers. It was also noted that it was mainly children from poverty stricken families who fell victim to crimes and abuse. It is therefore from that point that they offer their services to help the children who are vulnerable.

In reference to the acts of child sacrifice in their operational areas and the country at large, interviews with some officers revealed that NGOs have had minimum influence and interventions in the crimes reported.

An Officer of ANPPCAN Rakai office stated,

“The institutions that are constitutionally mandated to handle child sacrifice practices have often been compromised. As such, the cases are not effectively handled and there is no legal or psychosocial support provided to the victims’ families. We only come in to make a follow up on the cases, where possible, through providing legal support, sensitization and rehabilitation of the survivors and the deceased’s guardians/parents; which intervention has a minimum impact”.

The study revealed that NGOs have taken part in the fight against the acts of child sacrifice and other abuses of children’s rights through different measures and through partnership with the Police and other Government institutions. There has been massive sensitization of the communities at the district and grass root level. Activities such as sensitization workshops of local leaders, community sensitization barazas, music, dance and drama in schools have been carried out.¹¹⁵

Schools have been sensitized to enhance children’s consciousness and the authority’s vigilance towards any suspicious visitors and acts.¹¹⁶

Similarly, posters have been displayed and adverts run on local radio stations and in newspapers to discourage acts of child sacrifice and increase people’s awareness.¹¹⁷

Documentary video clips have been used to enhance awareness among communities on the need to join efforts to fight the crime.¹¹⁸

It was also noted that paralegal advice and reference have been offered to the victims of human rights abuse in the regions.¹¹⁹ Some organizations including ANPPCAN, FAPAD-Lira, and Trans-Cultural Psycho-social Organization have managed to provide psychosocial support and rehabilitation to the victims of child sacrifice, most especially the survivors.

115 ANPPCAN- Uganda, Save the Children- Uganda, Gideon Foundation, Buddukiro Children’s agency

116 Ibid

117 ANPPCAN Uganda, Save the Children, Raising Voices

118 Gideon Foundation, Soroti district

119 Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund(Uganda)(ASB), Child Fund International, ANPPCAN- Uganda



Communities visited in different districts noted that they had adopted interventions to help curb the vice to which interventions they attribute the reduction in the number of cases.

For example: In Rakai district, communities had increased their vigilance in identifying and reporting new residents of their communities to the local authorities. This was because many of the new settlers were coming from Tanzania and disguising as traditional healers.

In Masaka district, residents in the sub-counties that were visited had adopted the practice of sensitizing communities using different platforms like church sessions and community meetings. Sensitization was aimed at informing the communities about the practice and how they could participate in stopping its occurrence to protect their children.

In Lira and Gulu districts, it was reported that schools had set up strict rules on who drops &/or picks the children at school. This was after a murder case of a school going boy that had happened in Lira after a stranger and a boda-boda man known to the boy picked him from school and later his headless body was discovered dumped in the bush. School administrations were strictly monitoring who was responsible for bringing and picking the children at school especially the kindergarten and primary school going children.

Community Policing conducted by Uganda Police Force in the visited districts and communities was an intervention that had been extensively done to help inform the communities about the practice of child sacrifice and their role in combating it.

Reports from Police indicated that investigations had been conducted in the reported cases of child sacrifice with a few being concluded by Court and perpetrators sentenced.

However, in the districts of Gulu, Lira and Soroti, all the key informants interviewed, in particular the parents/guardians of the victims reported that Police did not conclusively conduct the investigations to apprehend or bring the suspects to book. This left the communities concerned and unsatisfied about the work done by the law enforcers.

For example a respondent in Soroti, a guardian to a victim, commented that,

“Police did not help us that much when we reported and had the suspects. Little investigations were made into the matter. They later let the suspects go scot free. When we tried to follow up on the case, they kept on demanding for our patience and after some time we were informed that the file was missing. We had nothing to do; we gave up on the case and no one was answerable for the death of our child”



Uganda Police noted some of the challenges and short comings they face in investigating and curbing the crime. The challenges included; There are still many people who believe in witchcraft and who practice suspicious rituals. These could therefore be conducting such acts in disguise and hiding. The situation has been worsened by the existence of fake traditional healers/herbalists (*bafere*) who are taking advantage of the ignorance of the people who go to consult them on different issues.

The Police further noted that reports of missing persons and suspected ritual murders are sometimes made late to Police and crime scenes are sometimes already tampered with before arrival of Police officers.

It was also noted that there is a challenge of general delays in concluding the prosecution process whereby some suspects have been released on bail after the mandatory remand period and they end up interfering with the witnesses or running away.

Lack of a clear Government policy on the conduct of traditional healers has also made it difficult to identify the criminal ones amongst them.

It was confirmed by all stakeholders that though not fully curbed, through the interventions made, the crime incidences have decreased in their communities and the country at large.

Table 3: Non-governmental Organisations Contacted

S/N	Name of Organisation	Location
01.	Buddukiro Children's agency	Masaka
02.	Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO)	South western regional office Masaka
03.	World Vision	Masaka, Lira, Hoima and Soroti
04.	African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN)	Rakai & Kampala
05.	Mother Care Foundation	Hoima
06.	Buhimba Child Development Centre/ Compassion International	Hoima
07.	Kyabigambire Health Initiative	Hoima
08.	Buwuda Child Fund International	Kamuli



09.	Child Fund International	Kamuli, Lira
10.	Bugonda Early Child Centre	Kamuli
11.	Plan International Uganda	Kamuli
12.	Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund(Uganda) (ASB)	Lira
13.	Facilitation For Peace and development (FAPAD)	Lira
14.	Concerned Parents	Gulu
15.	Save the Children	Gulu
16.	War Child Holland	Gulu
17.	War Child Canada	Gulu
18.	Avocats San Frontiers (ASF)/FIDA	Soroti
19.	Trans-Cultural Psycho-social Organisation	Soroti
20.	Gideon Foundation Against Child Sacrifice-Uganda	Soroti

Source: *Sampled districts*

5

CHAPTER

FIVE

CHILD SACRIFICE AND ITS HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

5.0. Introduction

The cruel and inhumane manner in which child sacrifice is executed inevitably affects the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms by both the victims and their families. Even the lucky few who are saved from the jaws of death through unsuccessful attempts on their lives for purposes of child sacrifice are left to grapple with the physical and emotional scars and the resultant trauma for the rest of their lives.

It should further be emphasized that there are both rights holders and duty bearers in the spectrum of the enjoyment of human rights. Rights holders (in this case the victims of child sacrifice and their families) are entitled to enjoy their human rights and to claim their rights in the event of violation whilst duty bearers (Uganda government, local authorities and local communities) have a duty to protect and fulfil these rights. As a primary duty bearer, Uganda has an obligation to put mechanisms in place to ensure that children's rights are not violated as a result of the practice of child sacrifice.

5.1. The Right to Life

The fundamental nature of the right to life is demonstrated by the fact that without life the myriad of other human rights cannot be enjoyed. A successful execution of the act of child sacrifice snuffs out the young life of the victim and denies him/her the chance to live a positive and meaningful life.

Uganda is under obligation to prevent and punish deprivation of life by criminal acts.¹²⁰ Furthermore, Uganda is under the obligation to take specific and effective measures to prevent the disappearance of individuals and should thus establish effective facilities and procedures to thoroughly investigate cases of missing persons in circumstances which may involve a violation of the right to life.¹²¹

120 Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 06 The Right to Life (Art. 6), 04/30/1982, para. 3.

121 Ibid. Para. 4



Victims of child sacrifice are kidnapped by perpetrators and they disappear for protracted periods within which they are murdered. It is evident that speedy investigative measures are not only pertinent in preventing the deprivation of life in the event that the victim has not yet been murdered but also in apprehending the perpetrators in the event that the victim has been murdered.

5.2. The Right to Freedom from Violence

Acts of child sacrifice are tantamount to grave violence against children. A society in which acts of violence against children are rife negates the development of social and actively contributing children in that society due to the fact that children are living in perpetual fear. The CRC specifically provides for the protection of children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation.¹²² Uganda is mandated to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children against violence. Uganda's obligations in assuming its responsibilities towards children should not only be focused at the national level but also at the district, sub-county and local council levels. This obligation at the various levels entails the duty to investigate and punish those responsible for violence against children and the obligation to provide access to redress for human rights violations.¹²³

5.3. The Right to Freedom from Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading treatment

The acts involved in executing child sacrifice or an unsuccessful attempt of child sacrifice are extremely gruesome in nature. Victims are thus subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment due to the horrific acts that entail severing of victims' heads, private parts and other body parts while the victims are still alive.

Uganda has a duty to afford everyone protection, through legislative and other measures as may be necessary, against acts that amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment whether inflicted by those acting in their official capacity, outside their official capacity or in a private capacity.¹²⁴ Furthermore, complaints involving the violation of the right to freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment must be investigated promptly and impartially by competent authorities so as to make an effective remedy.¹²⁵

122 CRC supra note 59, Article 19(1)

123 Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 13, The Right of the Child to Freedom from all forms of violence (Art. 19), 18 April 2011, para. 5.

124 Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 20, Concerning Prohibition of Torture and Cruel Treatment or Punishment (Art. 7), 03/10/1992, para. 2.

125 Ibid. Para. 14



5.4. The Right to Liberty and Security of the Person

Victims of child sacrifice are kidnapped and taken away from their homes, schools or any other setting that does not allow for their close monitoring. The victims are held captive sometimes, for protracted periods, before they are killed off by the perpetrators of child sacrifice for their body parts. During the period of captivity, the victims' right to liberty and security of the person is compromised. In this regard, the right to personal liberty should not be restrictively interpreted to apply in situations when one has been arrested and detained. The deprivation of liberty is applicable both in criminal cases and in other cases.¹²⁶

5.5. The Right to Protection of the Family

The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and the importance of its protection is emphasized by both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights¹²⁷ and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.¹²⁸ However, the practice of child sacrifice is a threat to the sanctity of the family unit as children, who are members of families, are violently murdered. In other instances, children have to be separated from their parents or guardians in an effort to protect them from communities that have posed a danger to their lives through the prevalence of child sacrifice in the said communities. Families have also been forced to migrate from their original villages, leaving behind their relatives and friends, because of instances of child sacrifice. Uganda has an obligation to provide protection to the family and the persons composing it.¹²⁹

5.6. The Right to Education

The threat faced by children of being kidnapped and subjected to acts of child sacrifice while they are on their way to/from school affects their level of school attendance and it ultimately affects their enjoyment of the right to education. In areas where reports of acts of child sacrifice are prevalent, parents expressed fear of sending their children to school lest they are kidnapped and subjected to acts of child sacrifice which acts may lead to grave injuries and worse still death.

126 Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 8: Right to liberty and security of [persons (Art. 9), 06/30/1982, para. 1

127 Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 16 December 1966 and entered into force 23 March 1976. Ratified by Uganda on 21 June 1995 (Article 23)

128 Adopted by the Organization of African Unity on 27th June 1981 and entered into force on 21 October 1986. Ratified by Uganda on 10 May 1986.(Article 18(1)).

129 Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 19, Protection of the family, the right to marriage and equality of the spouses (Art. 23), 07/27/1990, para. 1.



6

CHAPTER

SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research was intended to establish whether or not child sacrifice occurs in Uganda.

It also sought to establish the causes and effects of child sacrifice on the victims, the parents, the communities and the nation at large. It was further profoundly envisioned to examine the child sacrifice acts in Uganda as a violation of children's human rights.

Human Rights are the basic and absolute rights that every person has because he or she is a human being. They recognize the vulnerability of the human being in civil, political, economic, social and cultural processes and provide protection. Human rights apply to all people including children, both boys and girls. While societies may vary in their ideas on childhood and child development, one thing that all can agree on is the importance of the well-being of children.

The findings of the study (Chapter Four) proved beyond reasonable doubt in all the sampled districts, child sacrifice occurs in Uganda; that cases have been reported to local leaders (LCs) and the Police and investigations were conducted. For some registered cases, the suspects were arrested, prosecuted, convicted and sentenced. The remains of most of the victims were recovered after some period of time ranging from days to months. Most of the victims were found with some body parts like tongues, eyes, private parts missing, for example in the case of Moses Ogenrwot (1 year 4 months old) of Paduy-Paromo, Gulu district. For others their heads were completely cut off (12 year-old Joseph Kasirye of Kayugi Masaka district) and others had their stomachs cut open (Clevus Bulumwa, 2 and half years old, of Salama-Luberenga camp in Kisoga tea estate, Mukono district). The state in which the bodies were found proved beyond reasonable doubt that ritual acts had been carried out on the victims. This gives the study good ground to establish that the practice of child sacrifice exists and is raging in Uganda.

The effect of child sacrifice is so great on the individual victims whose rights, including the right to life, are grossly violated. The right to life is fundamental and basic to the enjoyment of other rights because the right to life is the fountain from which other rights flow. Child sacrifice does not only affect the victims but also the parents and guardians who are psychologically and emotionally tortured by the brutal ways their innocent children are killed.



The communities and the nation at large are equally affected; they are affected by the death of their young citizens who would participate in the future development of Uganda.

In combating child sacrifice, the Commission commends the enactment of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2010 which criminalizes child sacrifice. The Commission further commends government's intervention in setting up a validated plan of action against child sacrifice, which plan is being implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Anti-Human Sacrifice and Trafficking Task Force under the Uganda Police Force.

In light of the findings and the conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) The Government, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Uganda Police Force, the Directorate of Public Prosecutions and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, should diligently enforce the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2010 in order to ensure that perpetrators of child sacrifice are punished and the would-be perpetrators are deterred.
- 2) The Government, through the Uganda Law Reform Commission, should amend the Witchcraft Act so as to make its provisions relevant to witchcraft as it is being practiced today and in the various forms it manifests. The Witchcraft Act as it is was enacted during the colonial times and as such is not responsive to the current practices of witchcraft which have since morphed to involve child sacrifice.
- 3) Government should implement a stringent regulatory framework through a policy to regulate the activities of traditional healers. Through collaboration with the leaders of the Traditional Healers Association of Uganda, the government should register all traditional healers in Uganda for easy monitoring of their activities. Through registration and diligent monitoring of the activities of traditional healers, government will be able to identify the quack traditional healers who extort money from the unsuspecting public and encourage their customers to engage in child sacrifice.
- 4) There should be a multi-sector approach in raising awareness to fight child sacrifice in Uganda. The government, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Uganda Police Force, the National Council for Children along with the Uganda Human Rights Commission and Civil Society Organisations involved in children's rights issues, should carry out intensive grassroots awareness campaigns targeting parents and communities about the dangers of human sacrifice, and specifically child sacrifice, and the grave consequences for its perpetrators.
- 5) Government should ensure that the Uganda Police Force is well facilitated to conduct investigations involving child sacrifice. This will enable the Police force to respond swiftly and effectively to reports and incidents of child sacrifice and to collect evidence that can effectively be relied upon in



the prosecution of cases involving child sacrifice.

- 6) All local leaders at LC. I and II levels should mobilize their communities to heighten the vigilance levels in reporting suspicious operations of quack traditional healers and identifying and reporting persons with suspected ill intent in order to protect innocent children from being kidnapped and sacrificed. Furthermore, communities should be vigilant in identifying and reporting to the police negligent parents and those parents who partake in transactions involving their children which transactions culminate in child sacrifice.
- 7) The Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Uganda Police Force and NGOs involved in the fight against child sacrifice, should set up a psychosocial support mechanism for victims of child sacrifice and their families.
- 8) Although it is an arduous task to change people's perceptions about practicing witchcraft in order to acquire wealth, efforts should be made through sensitization to debunk the myth that quick wealth can be acquired through the practice of child sacrifice.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LIST OF POLICE STATIONS AND POSTS VISITED

S/N	Name of Police Station/ Post	District
1.	Masaka Central Police Station	Masaka
2.	Ddimbo Police Post	
3.	Namirembe Landing Site Police Post	
4.	Buwunga Police Post	
5.	Nyendo Police Station	
6.	Kabonera Police Post	
7.	Kirimya Police Post	
8.	Kako Police Post	
9.	Mpugwe Police Post	
10.	Kyanamukaka Police Post	
11.	Malembo Landing Site Police Post	
12.	Kachanga Landing Site Police Post	
13.	Kyotera Police Station	Rakai
14.	Rakai Central Police Station	
15.	Mayanja Police Post	
16.	Kateera Police Post	
17.	Kansensero Police Post	
18.	Kakuuto Police Post	
19.	Kabonera Police Post	
20.	Mutukura Police Post	
21.	Lwanda Police Post	
22.	Kibaale Police Post	
23.	Bwanda Police Post	
24.	Kibanda Police Post	
25.	Kamuli Police Post	
26.	Ntantamuki Police Post	
27.	Kacheera Police Post	
28.	Lwamagwa Police Post	
29.	Buyamba Police Post	
30.	Kaliisizo Police Station	
31.	Kasasa Police Post	
32.	Ssanje Police Post	

33.	Mukono Central Police Station	Mukono
34.	Kisoga Police Post	
35.	Katosi Police Post	
36.	Mbalala Police Post	
37.	Lugazi Police Station	
38.	Lira Central Police Station	Lira
40.	Gulu Central Police Post	Gulu
41.	Kamuli Central Police Station	Kamuli
42.	Bulopa Police Station	
43.	Namwendwa Police Station	
44.	Kasambira Police Post	
45.	Namaganda Police Post	
46.	Busota Police Post	
47.	Mbulamuti Police Post	Hoima
48.	Hoima Central Police Station	
49.	Kazzingo Police Bit	
50.	Buseruka Police Post	
51.	Buhimba Police Post	
52.	Kitoba Police Post	
53.	Kyabigambire Police Post	
54.	Kibingo Police Post	
55.	Busiisi Police Post	
49.	Soroti Central Police Station	Soroti



APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

THE UGANDA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Directorate of Research, Education and Documentation
Child Sacrifice in Uganda and its Human Rights implications
The Questionnaire used to collect data from Partners and Stakeholders

Introduction

The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) is a Constitutional body established under Article 51 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, and the Uganda Human Rights Commission Act of 1997. Among other functions, the Commission is mandated under Article 52(1) (c), to establish continuing programmes of research, education and information to enhance respect of human rights. In line with the above, the Commission is conducting a research on the rights of children with specific reference to “Child Sacrifice and its human rights implications in Uganda, having noted that there are a number of reports raising concerns with regard to cases of child sacrifice and ritual killing which is rapidly increasing.

As part of the methodology to obtain information, UHRC has designed this questionnaire and kindly requests you to fill it. Any information given will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name of the Organization

.....

2. Where is it located?

Town

.....

Sub-county

.....

County

.....



District

.....

3. How long has it been in existence?

.....

.....

.....

4. What is the mandate of the Organization?

.....

.....

.....

SECTION TWO: Questions about Child Sacrifice

1. Have you heard about child sacrifice or ritual killings in your area of jurisdiction? YES/NO.....

2. If Yes, give some examples

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. What is the age bracket of the children alleged to have been sacrificed?

Tick

(0 – 3), (4 – 6), (7- 10), (11 – 13), (14 - 17).

4. What has the Organization done about such cases?

.....

.....

.....

.....



5. What do you think are the causes of child sacrifice?

.....

.....

.....

.....

6. What are the human rights implications of child sacrifice in Uganda?

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. What other important information would you like us to know about children's right to be protected from harmful practices like child sacrifice?

.....

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.....

.....

8. What do you recommend should be done to reduce child sacrifice in Uganda?

.....

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APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

THE UGANDA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Directorate of Research, Education and Documentation
Child Sacrifice in Uganda and its Human Rights implications
The interview guide used to collect data from Communities

Introduction

The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) is a Constitutional body established under Article 51 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, and the Uganda Human Rights Commission Act of 1997. Among other functions, the Commission is mandated under Article 52(1)(c), to establish continuing programmes of research, education and information to enhance respect of human rights. In line with the above, the Commission is conducting a research on the rights of children with specific reference to “Child Sacrifice and its human rights implications in Uganda, having noted that there are a number of reports raising concerns with regard to cases of child sacrifice and ritual killing which is rapidly increasing.

As part of the methodology to obtain information, UHRC has designed this questionnaire and kindly requests you to fill it. Any information given will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

1. Sex

☐ Female☐ Male

2. Place of residence of the respondent

Town/ Village

.....

Parish

.....

Sub-county

.....

County

.....



District

.....

3. We know that some people in Uganda carry out sacrifices as part of their culture. What sacrifices are normally made by the people in this community?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Have you heard of human sacrifices as one of these?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. Have you heard about child sacrifice?

.....

6. How old was the child or children said to have been sacrificed?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7. What did the Community do when they heard that a child had been sacrificed?

.....
.....



8. What did the Authorities do in this matter?

.....

.....

9. What further steps did the Community take where no serious action was taken by the Authority?

.....

.....

10. Who do you think are the people engaged in child sacrifice?

.....

.....

11. What do you think are the causes of Child Sacrifice?

.....

.....

12. What effects has the act of child sacrifice implicated on your life and to your community?

.....

.....

13. What have you personally done to protect your children from child sacrifice?

.....

.....

14. What do you think the Government of Uganda and other stake holders should do to stop child sacrifice?

.....

.....



15. What other additional information do you have in line with this issue of child sacrifice?

.....

.....



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