



## The messed up truth! - alarming repression of women's rights

By Harriet Robina Gimbo, Director Programs

The handling of the FDC supporter Zaina Fatima rekindled my thinking about the role of the military and police in keeping women's peace and security. It was so heart piercing to see the endless torture Zaina went through in the hands of the police expected to keep law and order. The scene turned to "keeping" injustice, injury, torture, and abuse of women's dignity by even women in the police force. In African tradition as was the case with the women in Appa and Soroti a couple of days ago, they unleashed the curse on the police as children born by the same women were stripped naked. Where can a woman feel totally safe in this complex country where polarized power and profit seem to rule?

I was astonished by the police spokespersons statement to the media that stated that nudity is a new political strategy that Africa is not used to and that it is possible that this lady undressed herself! Worse still, he added that the police involved would be taken for medical check-up. My question was whether they have deployed insane people to keep "insecurity." These restrictions on free movement, gatherings, speech, media, and organization functions are often against democracy. He owes an apology and more to the citizens and more so gallant women of this country.

During the last three weeks in Australia, we did have the honour to visit the Australian Civil Military Center to discuss the role of the force in women's peace and security. The key issues for Uganda was increasing militarism meted on Ugandan's in all spheres and most especially the extractive's sector; manifestations of injustice and failed state accountability and responsibility that have led to the lack of commitment of the government of Uganda to ensuring women's security.

Among the delegation we met were women that had served the army for over twenty years in the ranks of Captain's, Major's, Lieutenant's and General's. They have supported advisory and other roles on women's peace and security in Australia and other parts of the world. It was admirable to learn about the government and the army's commitment and resourcing to the promotion of rights of women in their roles. An interesting question was if the public in our countries had trust in the army and police. Your guess and our response tally no trust and respect anymore because we cannot even tell the difference between police and army anymore - and here comes Zaina and other citizen's experience.

But, do women trying to combat poverty, women not with power, clout, and leverage, have the tools and advocacy skills to defend their rights, individually and collectively? Yet, as part of the women's movement, this is our mandate: to be aware, to publicize, to offer good practices, to create coalitions and to prevent repression. Where are the women in Uganda in this? We need to wake up and be active than reactive like in such incidents. We must persevere as women, for women, with women, to protect our rights, always and ever, everywhere!

## Global IT conference in Bangkok

The Information Technology (IT) Conference was held in Bangkok, Thailand in late September where more than 50 participants met to interact, discuss IT issues, and agree on how to make Information & Communication Technology (ICT) systems and services better in ActionAid.

Almost all IT staff from the entire ActionAid participated with representation from other departments and units like Communications, Sponsorship, Finance, and major service providers. This marked the beginning of better synergy and collaboration among various departments, units, and relevant ICT partners.

The International IT strategy, policies and guidelines championed by the International Head of IT, Haris Yiasemis were on top on the agenda. The proposed IT strategy and policies will help improve on the efficiency of IT processes and quality of IT services in the federation.

One of the major operational outcomes of the meeting was the introduction of SPOC, which stands for Single Point of Contact. With SPOC, all IT support requests will be logged and handled through the footprints space primarily managed by the IT help desk in ActionAid UK. SPOC will help improve efficiency in ICT services in a more accountable and cost conscious way.

Implementation of new ICT systems that provide efficient utilisation and accountability on how we use the expensive internet connections in our offices were also proposed and discussed.

## Kalangala forms District Integrity Promotion Forum



Kalangala district formed the District Integrity Promotion Forum (KDIPF) with all the leaders to play their role in the fight against corruption. The Director of Ethics made the call and Integrity in the office of the president following a two-day training of a cross section of the district leaders including the representatives from the office of the RDC, the district executive, the technical staff, civil society and faith based organization. In total, 21 district leaders attended.

In his remarks, the chairperson LCV Mr. Willy Lugolobi challenged the NGOs involved in the anti-corruption work to walk the talk. He cited instances where NGO representatives have given him facilitation but asked him to sign without indicating the amount he is signing for. He told the participants to look beyond the single individual contribution and focus on the team contribution to the fight against corruption.

The RDC said he was surprised by media reports indicating that the national NGO Board has over 50 NGOs that renewed their certificates indicating that they operate in Kalangala. He promised to hold a meeting with NGOs operating in the district and mount a crackdown on brief case NGOs.

## International campaign planning meeting in Nairobi



Policy and Campaigns Manager Fredrick Kawooya and Programme Officer Timothy G. Kabaale represented ActionAid Uganda at the international campaign planning meeting in Nairobi last week.

The workshop discussed the integrated federation plan, which provides an overview of federation-wide priorities in 2016-17. The meeting outlined key areas of focus for the next two years, and aligned a collective effort to secure stronger campaigns anchored both locally and internationally. The participants discussed how to deliver the remaining two years of our current International Strategy - People's Action to End Poverty.

Among other contributions from ActionAid Uganda, Fredric Kawooya gave insight to a planning session on key campaigning moments for the multi country campaigns of the three campaigns; Land Justice, Tax Justice, and Safer Cities.

The meeting came up with a roadmap for ActionAid International campaigning that shall guide country campaign programming for 2016-2017. AAU's focus is on Land and Tax Justice for gender responsive social services, challenging inequality and fostering solidarity.

## NEXT WEEK:

Besides our normal day-day work, most of us will be kept busy by budgets.