

Our Hopes are Worn Youth in Northern Uganda

In August, 2006 Aol Lucy and Acire Geoffrey, two leaders in CAP Uganda, traveled to Canada to attend a special conference on child soldiers issues. This international workshop, titled "Expanding the Dialogue - Preventing the use of Children as Soldiers" included delegates from many different countries.

Lucy and Geoffrey represented the views of the CAP groups in northern Uganda. They played an important role as part of the small youth delegation for this conference. On the way to the conference, Lucy wrote this poem that she read to the plenary.

Our hopes are worn,
Out with pain, of crimes committed against us
Facing death, rape, torture and slavery
What hope do we have?

Like animals we are hunted, our homes are destroyed,
Parents, brother, sisters killed.
Where then is our home?

John my dear friend, I do recall,
Was chopped to death as we watched,
For his crime was being weak, tired and could not walk.
There is no hope in our future.

To the community we have become enemies,
We are being isolated, rejected, ignored,
By our brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers,
Meanwhile rebels, murderers and robbers,
Have become our names.
Daily our hope withers thereby.

Our children born in captivity,
Where the crime scars,
That we thought would vanish,
When we return back home,
Are not excepted in the community,
By our people,
Then where should we belong?
Or should we end our lives by going back to the bush
Because we see no hope.

Dear nation, the international community,
Parents, brothers, sisters.
Let us wake up,
And struggle for peace together,
For the new generation.
And to stop recruiting children,
In armed forces.

Lucy Aol, 17 years old, Leader of Child Mother Group, CAP Uganda.

