

**2. C.A. MUMMA- MARTINON<sup>1</sup>, DR. FR. ELIAS OMONDI OPONGO<sup>1</sup> GETTING MALE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN MT. ELGON REGION TO TELL THEIR STORIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION: AN INSIGHT INTO KENYA'S TRUTH, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TJRC)**

**ABSTRACT**

In 2008, following the post election violence over disputed elections that left more than 1500 people dead, the Kenyan government established the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC). The TJRC was established with the mandate to investigate acts of gross human rights violations and any other historical injustices in Kenya committed between 12 December 1963 and 28 February 2008.

In its many rounds of public hearings in different parts of the country<sup>1</sup>, the TJRC has been confronted with the difficult challenge of getting the victims of violence, perpetrators turned victims and non-victims to tell their stories. The fear, trauma and embarrassment from these humiliating experiences made it difficult for the TJRC to draw out information from the victims, non-victims and perpetrators. As a result, the TJRC has had to embark on creative ways of getting people to tell their stories.

This study is based on a field research that examines how through a creative and innovative process, the TJRC encouraged the male victims of violence in the Mt. Elgon region to tell their stories. From the public hearings, the Commission used anecdotal evidence of violence against men to further investigate the extent to which human rights violation could have been committed. By encouraging non-victims to talk to victims and eventually to perpetrators, a ripple effect of storytelling ensued leading to a widespread participation in truth telling, physical healing (including medical care), emotional healing (including trauma healing) and social healing.

This study highlights the importance of cultural creativity in helping victims of human rights violation confront the past while interactively engaging with victims, non-victims and perpetrators of violence. Another important angle to this study is how the concept of common victimhood between the non-victim, perpetrator and direct victims of human rights violations forms solidarity of justice and understanding geared towards restoration of broken relationships, reparation and physical healing.

The different sections of this study therefore, attempt to address what exact issues on human rights violations are being dealt with in this region that was majorly affected by the 2007/2008

political crisis; when these violations took place; how they were identified; why this particularly case was selected among over 40,000 cases heard by TJRC; who the victims, non-victims and perpetrators are; how the actors cooperated and are working together to overcome different challenges while at the same time attempting to communally find solutions to their problems.