

**AFRICAN CENTRE FOR TREATMENT AND
REHABILITATION OF TORTURE VICTIMS (ACTV)**



2024
ANNUAL REPORT

**“Refusing to Bury our Heads in the Sand;
Driving Stigma towards the Perpetrators”**



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Message from the Board Chairperson



**Mr. John Livingstone
Okello**

Dear Friends, Partners, and Valued Stakeholders,

As the Chairperson of the Board for the African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV), it is with immense pride and profound gratitude that I present to you our 2024 Annual Report. This past year encapsulated our powerful theme: **“Refusing to Bury our Heads in the Sand; Driving Stigma towards the Perpetrators”**. This was truly demonstrated through ACTV’s unwavering commitment to justice and healing for survivors of torture, gender-based violence and other forms of violence.

Uganda’s operational landscape in 2024 presented significant challenges. We navigated a restrictive political environment, where freedom of expression and association faced considerable pressures. The surge in violence stemming from persistent land disputes also meant increased demand for our crucial services. Furthermore, the rationalisation of the NGO Bureau raised concerns regarding regulatory independence, requiring us to remain vigilant and adaptable.

Despite these contextual hurdles, ACTV remained steadfast in its commitment to provide holistic rehabilitation services to survivors of torture and violence in Uganda. Our resolve saw us expand our services with the opening of a new, fully-fledged rehabilitation centre in Kaabong District, significantly extending our reach into the Karamoja Sub-region. We successfully provided comprehensive care to 1,936 survivors, exceeding our annual target and restoring hope and functionality to countless individuals. Built capacity of state and non-state actors to effectively prevent and respond to torture and violence, and we successfully support survivors to get justice through the courts of laws.

Our achievements this year are a testament to the dedication of our staff, the resilience of the survivors we serve, and the invaluable support of our donors and partners. We strengthened collaborative networks,

empowering both communities and professionals, and made significant strides in advocating for justice at national, regional, and international levels.

As we look forward, ACTV remains committed to our vision of a world free from torture. We are driven by our core values of teamwork, professionalism, integrity, and compassion. Thank you for standing with us in this vital mission. Together, we will continue to drive stigma towards perpetrators and ensure that survivors receive the care and justice they deserve. In a special way, we invite you to support our campaign of building a state-of-the-art rehabilitation centre which will serve as a beacon of hope for survivors who suffer from the devastating and indescribable trauma.

Sincerely,

Mr. John Livingstone Okello Okello
Board Chairperson

Message from the Chief Executive Officer



**Samuel Herbert
Nsubuga**

Dear Partners and Friends,

Another year has ended with the African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) continuing to implement its mission of advocating against torture, gender-based violence and other forms of violence, in addition to providing holistic care to survivors.

Unfortunately, torture is still prevalent in Uganda, with the statistics shared in the report illustrating a marked increase in 2024, the year under review, to 1,936 survivors of torture registered to receive our services. ACTV has continued to provide services to our three centres in Kanyanya in Kampala, Layibi Division in Gulu, and Kaabong in the Karamoja Sub-region. The Kaabong centre was established in October, a significant achievement for the Karamoja Sub-region, which has required such services as we offer for many years because of the disarmament process, which has led to human rights violations in that part of Uganda.

ACTV has a field office in Kasese in Western Uganda, and we have continued applying the community volunteers' approach. Using this approach, ACTV trains community volunteers in basic counselling skills, and our team coordinates the approach and refers specialised cases to ACTV, in particular, and hospitals and health institutions, in general. With the above three centres and field office, ACTV continues to provide treatment and rehabilitation services to survivors of torture and violence to enable them to deal with the physical and psychological effects of torture, or cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment. ACTV also has an extensive outreach programme for those who are not able to visit our centres and field office, who are reached through community outreach and home visits.

ACTV also continues to advocate against torture by creating awareness and providing training in the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act (PPTA) or anti-torture law, in particular, and in torture prevention measures, in general, to various stakeholders including, but not limited to, the security agencies, journalists, human rights defenders, health workers and the general public.

ACTV, in partnership with the Uganda Human Rights

Commission (UHRC), continues to advocate for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) and the enactment of the Witness Protection Bill into law in order to expand the legal framework to combat the vice of torture.

ACTV is currently in search of support to build a state-of-the-art rehabilitation centre as part of the sustainability strategy to continue to provide services to survivors of torture and violence, and you are urged to be part of this campaign.

In conclusion, ACTV remains eternally grateful to the staff who have year in, year out continued to provide holistic services to survivors of torture and violence. We are also grateful to the ACTV Board for the wisdom and guidance it keeps providing as we fulfil our mandate. ACTV also thanks our development partners who have continued to support us even in the face of the shrinking fundraising landscape, and also to our partners, both state and non-state actors, without whom it would not have been possible to complete the rehabilitation cycle, which includes the survivors accessing justice.

Yours sincerely,

Samuel Herbert Nsubuga
Chief Executive Officer
African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation
of Torture Victims (ACTV)

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|----------------|---|
| ACHPR | African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights |
| ACTV | African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture |
| CAT | Coalition Against Torture |
| CFLI | Canadian Fund for Local Initiative |
| CMI | Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence |
| CPTA | Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa |
| CSVR | Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation |
| DIGNITY | Danish Institute Against Torture |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| GBV | Gender-based Violence |
| IRCT | International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims |
| LRA | Lord's Resistance Army |
| NCHRD | National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders |
| NUP | National Unity Platform |
| OPCAT | Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture |
| PPTA | The Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act |
| PSWs | Peer Support Workers |
| PTSD | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| RDC | Resident District Commissioner |
| RLP | Refugee Law Project |
| SOTs | Survivors of Torture |
| UHRC | Uganda Human Rights Commission |
| UNCAT | United Nations Committee Against Torture |
| UNOHCHR | United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| UNVFVT | United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture |
| UPDF | Uganda People's Defence Forces |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| VSLA | Village Savings and Loans Association |



Who we are and where we work

The African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to advocating against torture, gender-based violence (GBV) and other forms of violence, and providing holistic care to survivors in Uganda. Through strategic partnerships and collaboration with government agencies, international bodies, CSOs, and communities, ACTV works to strengthen policies for torture prevention and accountability, improve access to lifesaving services and justice to survivors of torture and violence, and empower communities to be resilient and demand accountability for torture and violence. With over 30 years of experience, ACTV utilises the Holistic Rehabilitation Model to reach out to survivors, research and documentation to undertake evidence-based advocacy, and capacity building to empower state and non-state actors to effectively carry out their role. ACTV's holistic approach aims to create lasting positive change by ensuring strong systems to prevent torture and violence, and to support to survivors.

ACTV key strategic pillars



Our Vision

A world free from torture

Our Mission

To advocate against torture, gender-based violence, other forms of violence and provide holistic care to survivors.

Core values

- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Professionalism
- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Compassion

ACTV's geographical reach in 2024

Central Region: Kampala, Wakiso, Mukono, Gomba, Masaka, Mubende, Kayunga

Eastern Region: Kapchorwa, Bukwo, Mbale

Northern Region: Gulu, Amuru, Lira, Apac, Kitgum, Agago, Pader, Oyam, Kwanja, Nwoya, Omoro

Karamoja Sub-region: Kaabong, Kotido

Western Region: Kasese, Hoima

ACTV'S GEOGRAPHICAL REACH IN 2024

SUMMARY OF KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2024

MAP OF UGANDA SHOWING ACTV COVERAGE



Key:

- ACTV LOCATIONS
- Eastern Region
- Central Region
- Western Region
- Northern Region

- ❖ Opened up a comprehensive rehabilitation centre in Kaabong District to coordinate ACTV interventions in the Karamoja Sub-region.
- ❖ Expanded the Coalition Against Torture (CAT) by adding 11 new members from Central Region and Karamoja Sub-region in Uganda.
- ❖ Recruited and trained 152 Community Support Network volunteers to improve access to timely rehabilitation services for survivors.
- ❖ Established a network of 39 professionals in medico-legal documentation in Uganda.
- ❖ Extended holistic care to 1,932 survivors of torture and violence, which contributed to their improved physical, psychological and social wellbeing.
- ❖ Built the capacity of 636 state and non-state actors for torture prevention and response.
- ❖ Raised awareness about torture and violence among 13,544 people.
- ❖ Established a network of 20 journalists to investigate and report on cases of torture and gender-based violence through a trauma informed approach.
- ❖ Developed a comprehensive gender-based violence response programme.
- ❖ Improved ACTV collaborations with partners at regional and international levels through organised anti-torture campaigns during the 81st Open Session of the ACHPR.
- ❖ Supported access to justice for 448 cases, of which 03 cases were successfully concluded in courts of law.
- ❖ Empowered 76 survivors through livelihood programmes.
- ❖ Held an inaugural fundraising dinner to solicit funds for the ACTV state-of-the-art rehabilitation centre for survivors of torture and violence, and celebrated 30 years of ACTV.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2024, ACTV implemented the fourth year of her 2021–2025 Strategic Plan, a period defined by both significant challenges and remarkable resilience. Despite operating within a restrictive political and social environment, and facing an increase in cases of torture and violence, ACTV remained steadfast in its commitment to provide holistic rehabilitation services to survivors and to advocate for its prevention. Through the theme **“Refusing to Bury our Heads in the Sand; Driving Stigma towards the Perpetrators”**, ACTV not only provided comprehensive rehabilitation services to 1,932 survivors, but also managed to shift societal attitudes and hold perpetrators accountable. The opening of the ACTV centre in Kaabong District contributed to the increase in the number of survivors reached in 2024. This report details our achievements and challenges, as well as the lessons learnt, demonstrating our unwavering dedication to creating a world free from torture.

1.1. Operational Context

In 2024, ACTV operated within a significantly constrained environment. The prevailing political landscape was characterised by a restrictive atmosphere, compelling many NGOs to exercise self-censorship to mitigate the risk of being targeted by the government. This was evident during the March to Parliament Campaign, where activists were subjected to brutal arrests and detentions, highlighting the suppression of freedom of expression and association.

Furthermore, the persistent and widespread land wrangles across the country and the insecurity in the Karamoja Sub-region directly fuelled an increase in torture and violence cases, hence an increase in the demand for ACTV's services.

In addition, the rationalisation of the NGO Bureau, that transitioned it into a sub-department within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, raised significant concerns about the bureau's independence, potentially compromising its ability to impartially regulate NGOs. For ACTV, this shift necessitated close monitoring of evolving regulatory frameworks and adjustments to ensure compliance, while also navigating the broader implications for advocacy efforts.

Another notable development was the appointment of persons (the Inspector General of Police (IGP) and the deputy) with police training to lead the Uganda Police Force. For the first time in many years, the institution is now not led by military personnel. This transition was seen as a positive step towards demilitarising and professionalising the police force, with the new leadership introducing a sub-county police model to improve responsiveness at the grassroots level. ACTV took this opportunity to advocate for improved police professionalism, emphasising the importance of preventing torture and violence and ensuring accountability within the police force.

Demographically, Uganda's National Population Census revealed a population increase from 34.6 million in 2014 to 45.9 million in 2024. The data highlighted that children and youth constitute the majority of the population, which has implications for ACTV's programming. It signalled the need for ACTV to increasingly focus on engaging young people and integrating their needs into rehabilitation and awareness-raising activities.

2.0 ACTV 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1. Treatment and Rehabilitation of Survivors: Restoring Lives through Holistic Care

2.1.1. Opening the ACTV rehabilitation centre in Kaabong District, Karamoja Sub-region

In the year 2024, ACTV expanded access to vital treatment and rehabilitation services by opening up a fully-fledged rehabilitation centre in Kaabong District to serve the Karamoja Sub-region. Karamoja is a region with a high prevalence of torture and gender-based violence cases, but with limited access to services. The expansion into the Karamoja Sub-region allowed ACTV to extend her reach to a previously underserved population.



Photos 1 – 4: The community and stakeholders during the opening of the ACTV Kaabong centre.

2.1.2. Improving the quality of life and wellbeing for survivors

During the year 2024, ACTV successfully registered and provided comprehensive care to 1,932 (1,142 male and 790 female) survivors of torture and violence. The services, which included medical care, mental health services, and social support, were provided by ACTV professionals. The survivors were reached through targeted medical outreach activities, home visits and referrals from the community support networks volunteers who were trained by ACTV. Through the lifesaving rehabilitation services provided, at least 15% (290) survivors were able to overcome their psychological trauma, had their physical wellbeing restored, and gained hope for the future. This significantly improved their quality of life and wellbeing, leading to social reintegration.

Table 1: Holistic care services offered to survivors

| SERVICE | SURVIVORS ENROLLED | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Medical Services | 742 | 623 | 1365 |
| Physiotherapy | 232 | 166 | 398 |
| Mental Health Services | 127 | 109 | 236 |
| Social Support Services | 177 | 164 | 341 |

Survivors' voices

"Before ACTV's intervention, I felt completely marginalised and hopeless; no one in the community wanted to associate with me, and I often avoided community gatherings, viewing myself as a failure. This greatly changed after undergoing through the intensive psychological counselling and receiving social support from ACTV. Now I am a happy person, my family and the community recognises me as person and includes me in every significant decision-making process. This transformation is entirely thanks to the unwavering support services I got from ACTV.

"When I first visited ACTV centre in Kampala, I was in great pain and I was troubled by nightmares of the incident I gone through, I was always sad and couldn't stand anything that reminded of the torture I suffered. The psychologist diagnosed me PTSD and enrolled for psychological counselling. I was also treated the medical doctors for the chronic physical pains. After a period of 6 months, I was better and now I do not suffer from the trauma that had taken over my life."

2.1.2. (a) The ACTV special medical care services

A total of 2,127 (1,187 male and 940 female) survivors, including the 1,332 that were newly enrolled, received specialised medical care from the ACTV medical team for the physical ailments suffered because of torture, GBV and other forms of violence. Of these, 398 received physiotherapy services, including essential physiotherapy appliances, which contributed to restoring mobility and to pain alleviation.

2.1.2. (b) Community medical outreach

ACTV conducted a total of 20 community medical outreach activities across the districts of Gomba, Kayunga, Kasese, Lira City, Kaabong, and Kampala, and extended ACTV's holistic services to remote and underserved communities. Through the outreach, 714 (401 male and 313 female) vulnerable survivors were reached and vital care was directly provided.

Table 2: Summary of the community medical outreach activities conducted in 2024

| District/ Location | No. of outreach activities | Number of survivors reached | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| | | Male | Female | Total |
| Gomba | 3 | 37 | 38 | 75 |
| Kayunga | 2 | 10 | 34 | 44 |
| Lira City | 1 | 5 | 22 | 27 |
| Kaabong | 9 | 235 | 174 | 409 |
| Kasese | 4 | 108 | 36 | 144 |
| Kampala | 1 | 6 | 9 | 15 |
| Total | 20 | 401 | 313 | 714 |

A survivor’s story of inspiration

Restoring hope through medical care

John was a dedicated husband, a father of five children and a casual worker. In 2022, during the COVID-19 pandemic, John was severely tortured by security agents as they enforced the COVID-19 guidelines; he was subjected to a brutal beating, kicked and trampled. He lost consciousness and sustained a spine injury. He lived in a sorry state for over a year, unable to stand or walk, and to control his bowel movements. He became a problem to his family, which made him descent into a major depression, to the extent of wanting to commit suicide.

John met ACTV during a community outreach activity. He was enrolled for the ACTV holistic rehabilitation services that included intensive medical care and physiotherapy, psychological counselling and social support. Items that included a lumbar corset and crutches were provided to aid his movements, and food support. Key home-based physiotherapy practices were prescribed that alleviated his pain and enabled him to regain his ability to stand and walk. After a full year of intensive rehabilitation services, John’s physical and psychological wellbeing was restored; he was able to stand and walk again, and the depressive symptoms had subsided. He was once again able to happily live with his family.

“I always cried and developed anger, seeing my husband bedridden and helpless, being unable to do anything for himself. Now I am happy. He is back on his feet; he can walk and he is soon resuming his work,” John’s wife gushed.

2.1.3. Improved mental wellbeing through caring for the mind

With its unique approach, ACTV greatly improved the mental wellbeing of 236 (127 male and 109 female) survivors of torture and violence by addressing their profound psychological trauma that resulted from the torture and violence incidents experienced. The mental health services targeted incoming survivors at the centre and through organised outreach activities and prison visits. ACTV offered services that included individual and group psychological counselling, brief family therapy, and referral for other care services. The ACTV Mental Health Coordinator noted, “90% of the survivors seen at ACTV present with a mental health challenge ranging from mild to severe. Survivors come with severe symptoms of depression, PTSD and anxiety. We have also received those with major behavioural changes resulting from the psychological trauma suffered.”

Comments from the survivors that received mental health services

“I used to take painkillers most times because I had chronic headache but after the session of sharing torture experiences, I now feel relaxed and I no longer use painkillers like before.”

“I fill joy and happiness; I can afford to smile after a long time of living in sadness, being troubled with nightmares and uncontrolled anxiety. The counselling taught me how to cope and overcome my past bad experiences.”

“The ACTV psychologist saved from suicide; through counselling I was able to realise that there is more I can still offer in life despite of my past harrowing experience.”



Photo 5: Group psychological counselling for women secondary survivors of torture (SOTs).

Secondary trauma: The story of wives of survivors of political violence!

Following the 2021 general elections, several women witnessed their husbands kidnapped, and tortured, and become victims of enforced disappearance. Others received continuous threats in connection with their husbands who were political activists. The situation generated enormous stress, which resulted in significant mental health challenges among the wives of the survivors of the 2021 political violence.

“As we went through counselling of men that were survivors of political violence, it was observed that majority of them repeatedly talked about their wives, behaviours pointing to signs of mental health challenges,” commented the ACTV Counselling Psychologist. Fifteen wives were assessed, and they all exhibited high levels of anxiety, aggressiveness, nightmares, sadness, hopelessness, and suicidal thoughts, among others.

They were enrolled into group psychological counselling to enable them to overcome their mental health challenges that resulted from the secondary trauma. After a series of 10 intensive psychological counselling sessions, the wives had significantly improved their mental wellbeing, and their husbands were happy and positive than they were before the counselling sessions.

“When my husband came back from detention, I psychologically broke down. I couldn’t imagine him being in a state of helplessness. I developed a lot of anger towards the people that had tortured him. I had nightmares. I started drinking alcohol to be able to get sleep. After the counselling, I am now a better person, I no longer experience all the symptoms, and I know how to cope in the event I experience triggers,” said one of the wives that had attend the group counselling sessions.

“The group counselling has restored my mental wellbeing. When I interacted will women that had gone through the same experience, I developed a sense of hope. The nightmare stopped and I wasn’t anxious anymore,” announced another woman who had completed the group counselling sessions.

2.1.4. Helping Survivors Thrive through Social Support

“At ACTV, we are deeply committed to supporting survivors of torture in their journey towards healing and reintegration into society. We work with individual survivors to rebuild their self-esteem, their families and the community to address the stigma projected towards survivors of torture and violence,” the ACTV Social Work Coordinator pointed out.

ACTV offered social support to a total of 596 (287 male and 309 female) survivors, with 274 specifically benefitting from personalised social counselling to address their diverse social challenges, facilitating meaningful progress in their recovery journeys. This significantly enabled reintegration and built the resilience of survivors within their families and the community. In addition, 64 survivors were supported with basic needs that included accommodation, food, and clothing, which helped in addressing their immediate needs as they were going through rehabilitation. A total of 24 targeted home visits were carried out, with 422 (234 male and 188 female) primary and secondary survivors being reached.

Table 3: Summary of the home visits conducted

| District | Number of visits | SOTs reached | | Total |
|---|------------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| Gomba | 03 | 28 | 18 | 46 |
| Kayunga | 02 | 09 | 11 | 20 |
| Masaka | 02 | 04 | 09 | 13 |
| Amuru, Nwoya, Lamwo, Lira, Pader and Gulu Districts | 12 | 181 | 140 | 321 |
| Kampala | 05 | 12 | 10 | 22 |
| Total | 24 | 234 | 188 | 422 |



Photo 6: The ACTV team with a family during a home visit in Pader District.

2.2. Community Support Network

ACTV expanded the community support network by recruiting 152 (82 male and 70 female) new community volunteers in the different parts of the country. The expanded network comprises 100 community facilitators, 20 community health workers and 32 community counsellors. A series of trainings were offered to the newly recruited volunteers to equip them with the knowledge and skills to support SOTs. Continuous follow-up as well as mentoring sessions were carried out among the previous and the new cohorts. Through the provision of basic rehabilitation services and sensitisation by the community support network volunteers, there was a significant improvement in help-seeking behaviour among the survivors affected by incidents of torture and violence. Through the community support network, a total of 6,744 (3,649 male and 3,095 female) people were reached by the volunteers through awareness raising, and 2,896 (1,098 male and 1,798 female) were supported with basic rehabilitation services.

Table 4: Summary of the community support network recruited and trained in 2024

| Group | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Community counsellors | 15 | 17 | 32 |
| Community health workers | 9 | 11 | 20 |
| Community facilitators | 58 | 42 | 100 |
| Total | 74 | 66 | 152 |

Table 5: Summary of the community members reached by the community support network volunteers in 2024

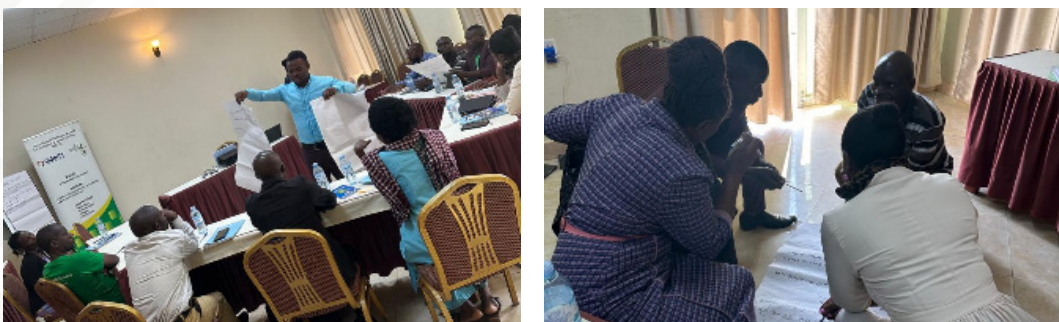
| Category | Service offered | Persons reached | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------|--------|--------------|
| | | Male | Female | Total |
| Community health workers | Medical treatment and documentation | 169 | 146 | 315 |
| Peer support workers | Basic social support and Psychological First Aid (PFA) | 649 | 826 | 1,475 |
| Community counsellors | Basic psychological counselling through Problem Management Plus (PM+) and PFA | 280 | 826 | 1,106 |
| Community facilitators | Community sensitisation | 3,649 | 3,095 | 6,744 |



Photos 7 – 11: Training of community counsellors in Kampala.



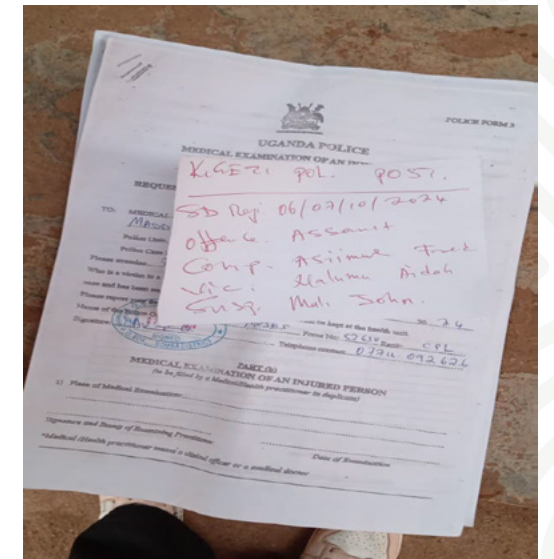
Photos 12 - 14: Training of community facilitators in Mukono.



Photos 14 - 17: Training of community counsellors in Kasese on Problem Management Plus.



Photos 18-19: Self-care exercises for the community support volunteers in Kasese.



Photos 20-21: Letters/forms referring cases where community volunteers supported survivors to report to Kigezi Police Posts in Gomba District.



Photos 22 -23: Community volunteers in green T-shirts raising awareness among boda-boda cyclists

2.3. Response to the July March to Parliament

On 23rd July 2024, several youth in Uganda, commonly known as Gen-Zs, took to the streets of Kampala in protest against the high incidence of state corruption. Their aim was to march to the House of Parliament. Over 100 youths were arrested by police and charged in courts of law. Several youths alleged that they were tortured and brutalised during arrest and detention. ACTV registered 5 (4 male and 1 female) youths who alleged that they experienced ill treatment and torture during the march to Parliament. These youths were assessed and offered treatment services accordingly. In addition, ACTV issued a statement calling upon the public and security agencies to be peaceful as they exercised their rights and carried out their mandates, respectively.



Photos 24 –27: The March-to-Parliament protests. Source: The internet.

2.4. Advocacy for Torture Prevention: Calling Stakeholders and Communities to Action

ACTV amplified the voices of survivors of torture and drove policy change through impactful advocacy initiatives. ACTV’s continued calling for the ratification of the OPCAT, enactment of the Witness Protection Act, improved documentation, investigation, and prosecution of torture cases, and improving access to rehabilitation services through relevant ministries, developing a national rehabilitation policy for survivors of torture. Key strategic interventions, which involved strengthening the Coalition Against Torture (CAT) by expanding its membership in the Central Region and the Karamoja Sub-region, capacity building of stakeholders, engagement with key stakeholders at the national and international levels, media campaigns, and community engagements, were undertaken.

2.4.1. Advocacy for ratification of OPCAT

ACTV developed a position paper and a policy brief that provided key rationales for Uganda ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT). This was presented to the Parliament of Uganda, i.e., the Human Rights Committee, the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, and the Office of the Speaker. In addition, the policy brief was shared to other relevant ministries and government agencies for action.

2.4.2 Engaging key stakeholders on torture prevention and accountability at national level

High-level engagement meetings were conducted with key stakeholders, both at the district and the national levels with government leaders, community-based organisations (CSOs), human rights defenders, and opinion leaders, to advocate for improved strategies for torture prevention and accountability. The meetings fostered collaboration and contributed to improved practices among duty-bearers.

Table 6: Summary of the engagements meeting held in 2024

| Date | District | Institution | Issues of discussion | Participants | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------|--------|-------|
| | | | | Male | Female | Total |
| District level | | | | | | |
| 11th June 2024 | Kayunga | Kayunga District leaders | Torture and violence incidents emerging from the community and strategies for collective action | 24 | 10 | 34 |
| 15th August and 4th December 2024 | Kasese | Kasese District leaders | Bi-annual engagement meetings with district leaders | 08 | 06 | 14 |
| October and November 2024 | Gomba | Gomba District leaders | Torture and violence incidents emerging from the community and strategies for collective action | 17 | 23 | 40 |
| 2nd November 2024 | Kotido District | Kotido District leaders | Torture and violence incidents emerging from the community and strategies for collective action | 04 | 0 | 04 |
| 31st October 2024 | Kitgum | Kitgum District leaders | Torture and violence incidents emerging from the community and strategies for collective action | 03 | 01 | 04 |
| National level | | | | | | |
| 10th December 2024 | Kampala | Officers in charge of prisons | Feedback gathered during the ACTV prison visits and generate actions on improving prison conditions | 07 | 02 | 09 |
| October | Kampala | Members of the Electoral Commission | The 2026 general elections; strategies for torture and violence prevention during elections | 5 | 1 | 06 |
| 26th September 2024 | Kampala | MDAs, CSOs, Development Partners | The situation of torture in Uganda: Prevalence, milestones in prevention, and existing gaps | 18 | 14 | 32 |



Photos 28 –29: The Chairperson of the Electoral Commission, other members of the Commission, and ACTV representatives after a dialogue meeting in the Electoral Commission boardroom.



Photos 30 –33: A feedback engagement with prison officers in Kampala.

2.4.3 Capacity building and trainings for stakeholders

ACTV successfully conducted capacity-building trainings for 636 (414 male and 222 female) key stakeholders, including journalists, Human Rights Defender (HRDs), police officers, state prosecutors, judicial officers, CAT members, and prison officers, enhancing their knowledge and skills in torture prevention and accountability. As a result of the training of journalists, a network of expert journalists who are expert at investigating and documenting torture cases was formed. Two (02) unique training programmes were launched, i.e., the training of police health workers in the documentation of torture cases following a needs assessment that was conducted in 2023; and the novel training of judicial officers (magistrates) in the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act (PPTA), Cap. 130, and trauma-informed approach in judicial work.

Table 7: Summary of the capacity-building trainings in 2024

| Title of the training | Target group | Location | Number of participants | | |
|---|---|-----------------|------------------------|--------|-------|
| | | | Male | Female | Total |
| The PPTA, Cap. 130, Regulations 2017 and the trauma-informed approach | Judicial officers (magistrates) | Kampala | 10 | 8 | 18 |
| Initial medical assessment for detainees | Prison officers | Kampala | 16 | 4 | 20 |
| The application of the PPTA 2014 and integration of trauma-informed approach | Police CID officers | Kaabong | 45 | 35 | 80 |
| The trauma-informed approach in investigating and reporting cases of torture | Journalists | Kampala & Gulu | 18 | 22 | 40 |
| Knowledge and skills on self-care and stress management | HRDs | Mbale | 13 | 8 | 21 |
| Institutionalising self-care and mental wellbeing in human rights organisations | HRDs | Kampala | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Investigation and documentation of torture cases | Police CIDs | Gulu City | 18 | 7 | 25 |
| The application of the PPTA 2012 and integration of the trauma-informed approach | State prosecutors and police CIDs | Jinja City | 14 | 10 | 24 |
| Documentation and care of survivors of torture | Police health workers | Kampala | 12 | 7 | 19 |
| Documentation and care of survivors of torture | Police health workers | Gulu | 12 | 19 | 31 |
| Joint training on HRBA and application of the PPTA 2012 | Police officers, prison officers, CSOs, Local Council leaders | Lira | 31 | 29 | 60 |
| Joint training on the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and application of the PPTA 2012 | Police officers, prison officers, CSOs, Local Council leaders | Pader District | 35 | 20 | 55 |
| Joint training on HRBA and application of the PPTA 2012 | Police officers, prison officers, CSOs, Local Council leaders | Moroto District | 37 | 22 | 59 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|------------|------------|------------|
| Training on HRBA and application of the PPTA 2012 for police trainees | Police trainees | Kabalye Police Training School | 71 | 9 | 80 |
| Training on HRBA and application of the PPTA 2012 for prison trainees | Prison trainees | Luzira Prison Academy and Training School | 80 | 20 | 100 |
| Total | | | 414 | 222 | 636 |



Photos 34 –36: Training of journalist in Kampala.



Photos 37 – 40: Training of judicial officers from Central Uganda at the Sheraton Hotel, Kampala.

2.2.4 Community engagements on torture prevention and accountability

During the year 2024, ACTV actively conducted community dialogue meetings between community members and duty-bearers across the country to foster trust between duty-bearers and rights-holders and empower communities to utilise torture response mechanisms. As a result, 6,800 (3,564 male and 3,236 female) community members were reached through a series of 42 dialogue meetings in districts including Masaka, Gomba, Kaabong, Kasese, Kitgum and Gulu.

Additionally, ACTV launched an awareness-raising campaign through sharing unsolicited SMS messages with members of the public to raise awareness about torture and available reporting mechanisms. In the course of this campaign, 200,000 unsolicited messages were sent out. In response, 1,213 persons called ACTV to make inquiries about torture and to seek referral information. A total of 56 were registered for services following the unsolicited SMS sharing.

Table 8: Summary of the community engagements conducted

| District | Number | Date | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------------|-----------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Lira | 2 | 7th March 2024, 2nd August 2024 | 183 | 278 | 461 |
| Pader | 2 | 19th April 2024, 16th August 2024 | 199 | 258 | 457 |
| Moroto | 2 | 7th June 2024, 13th September 2024 | 184 | 291 | 475 |
| Masaka District | 4 | February 2024 and November 2024 | 290 | 262 | 552 |
| Gomba | 5 | 26th - 28th February and 25th April 2024 and 31st October 2024 | 418 | 63 | 481 |
| Kaabong | 4 | 26 June 2024, 9th, 10th and 12th December 2024 | 401 | 557 | 958 |
| Gulu | 4 | 26 June 2024, 10th and 11th in December 2024 | 245 | 197 | 442 |
| Kitgum | 2 | 1th - 12th December 2024 | 155 | 116 | 271 |
| Kampala | 1 | 26th June 2024 | 125 | 144 | 269 |
| Kasese | 16 | | 1,364 | 1,070 | 2,434 |
| Total | 42 | | 3,564 | 3,236 | 6,800 |



Photos 41 - 48: Community members during a community dialogue meeting in Maddu, Gomba District.

2.2.4 Media campaigns

ACTV held a series of media campaigns on radios, TV stations, social media and print media to raise awareness about torture and violence and the available support services. Owing to the increased public agency, a total of 113 survivors that received services obtained information through the different media interventions.

Table 9: Summary of the media interventions undertaken in 2024

| Media Activity | Summary |
|------------------|---|
| Radio talk shows | - 23 radio talk shows were conducted across various districts, including Kampala (9), Kasese (2), Gomba (2), Gulu (5), Karamoja Sub-region (4), and Masaka (1). ACTV ensured localised discussions and engagement on torture and violence issues within the relevant context. |
| Spot messages | - 09 spot messages were produced and aired in five languages, i.e., English, Luganda, Luo, Nga'karimojong, and Lukhondo. |
| Television | - 01 investigative story was aired on Bukedde TV on 25th June. - 02 television talk shows (01 in Luganda on Bukedde TV, 01 in English on NTV). - 06 infomercials (03 in Luganda on Bukedde TV, 03 in English on NBS TV) were strategically aired around UN Day, raising public awareness about the prevalence of torture and highlighting response mechanisms. |
| Social media | - 03 targeted social media campaigns on Twitter/X and Facebook focused on documentation, mental health, and torture prevention were carried out under the #StopTortureUG24 campaign - Twitter Space discussion: A Twitter Space discussion on 27th June was carried and reached over 7,000 views and 423 listeners. - A total of 15,098 people were reached, including 176 new Twitter followers. |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Newspaper supplements | - 04 press statements were developed and released on significant human rights days (King's Day, Janan Luwum Day, International Women's Day, and World Mental Health Day), contributing ACTV's perspective to important national commemorations. - A comprehensive four-page newspaper pull-out in the <i>New Vision</i> newspaper on 26th June 2024, highlighting the trends of torture in the country and the initiatives taken by both the State and CSOs in addressing torture. |
| Press conferences | Two strategically timed press conferences were held in Kampala. - A joint press conference was held by the Coalition Against Torture (CAT) and the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) on 19th June. - A press conference on the trends of torture in Uganda held on 30 th January 2024 |



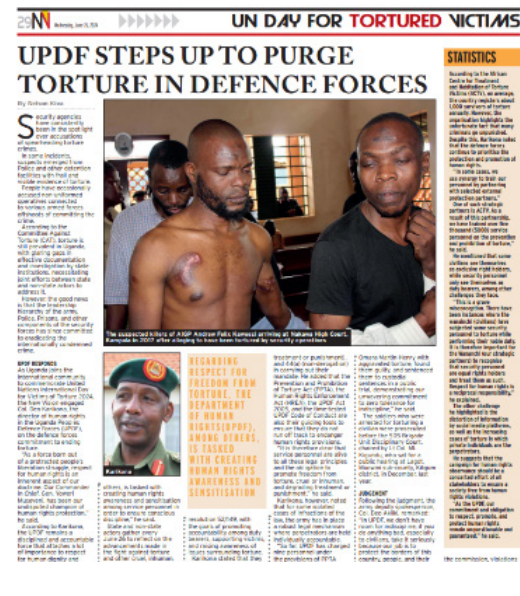
2.4.6 Commemoration of International Days

UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

ACTV, in collaboration with partners, commemorated the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, under the theme: **"Torture-Free Communities for All by All"**. A series of activities were conducted, including a joint press conference with the Uganda Human Rights Commission and CAT members, media campaigns, and three regional community dialogue meetings in Gulu and Kaabong Districts, and a National Public Dialogue in Kampala.



Photos 57 – 58: Events at the commemoration in Kaabong District officiated by the Chief



Photos 59 – 63: Events at the commemoration in Kampala officiated by the Chairperson,

Above: Copies of the news supplement in the New Vision.

Photos 49 – 56: The media campaigns conducted in 2024.

2.4.7 Regional and international advocacy

Participation in the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPRs)

ACTV attended the 81st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in Banjul, Gambia from 16th to 24th October 2024. ACTV presented a situation report on the status of torture in Uganda with a call to the State of Uganda to take up specific recommendations for follow-up and implementation to enhance the promotion, respect and protection of the right of freedom from torture. The link to the statement is <https://actvuganda.org/download/2462/?tmstv=1752739349>

Furthermore, ACTV was invited by the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa (CPTA) as an expert on issues of torture and made two presentations during the main session. ACTV also shared her lived experience in advocating against torture and participated in the launch of the CPTA's first newsletter at the same session.

Table 10: Side events organised and attended during the 81st Session of the ACHPR

| Theme of the side event | Organiser | ACTV contribution |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| The role of formal education in torture prevention and accountability in Africa | ACTV | Provided a statistical analysis of the survivors of torture reporting torture cases and the levels of education in Uganda |
| Commemoration of 40 years of United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) | UN Officer of Human Rights | Panellist for the event |
| Torture, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and redress in Africa | Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU) | Panellist for the event |
| Round-table discussion with the CPTA Chairperson | DIGNITY | Shared ACTV mandate, experiences and existing gaps in torture prevention and response at the regional level. |



Photos 64 – 69: The different ACTV engagements during the 81st Session of the ACHPR.

2.5 Building the body of knowledge on torture and violence through research and documentation

ACTV advanced the understanding of torture and violence through rigorous research and documentation, which informed best practices. During the year, a research study entitled **“The Prevalence and Drivers of Gender-Based Violence in Kasese District, Uganda”** was conducted and launched on 15th August 2024 in Kasese District. In attendance were key district officials, CSOs, and opinion leaders, and it was officiated by the Chief Magistrate of Kasese, Her Worship Betty Ajok. From the launch, the district initiated action to follow up on the Kasese District ordinance on the prevention of gender-based violence that had been developed years earlier and had stayed in the Solicitor’s Office without action.



Photos 70–72: The stakeholders in Kasese during the launch of a research study on the prevalence and drivers of GBV in Kasese.

2.6 Empowering Survivors through Sustainable Livelihoods

“Rehabilitation without livelihoods is a good car without tyres’. ACTV’s livelihood approach ensured that survivors are able to have a complete cycle of rehabilitation, they are empowered, self-reliant, fully reintegrated and able to thrive in the communities,” commented an ACTV Social Worker Coordinator.

During the year 2024, ACTV empowered 76 (24 male and 52 female) survivors through livelihood interventions that included vocational training in tailoring skills, the provision of business inputs as per the survivors’ strength, and the establishment of social groups with the integration of the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) concept. The livelihood intervention strategically enabled the survivors to mitigate the recurring trauma that resulted from the torture and incidents of violence experienced, equipped individuals with practical skills to nurture collective savings and investment, and ensured that survivors have the tools and community backing necessary to generate income and thrive.

Table 11: The ACTV livelihood programmes offered to survivors of torture

| Livelihood Intervention | Number of Survivors Supported | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Kampala | | Gulu | | Kaabong | | Total |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | |
| Skilling in tailoring | 00 | 06 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 10 | 16 |
| VSLA social support groups | 00 | 10 | 04 | 06 | 00 | 10 | 30 |
| Business inputs | 09 | 02 | 07 | 04 | 04 | 04 | 30 |
| Total | 09 | 18 | 11 | 10 | 04 | 24 | 76 |

A survivor’s story of inspiration



A journey from despair to self-reliance

At ACTV, we believe in not just treating the wounds of torture but also empowering survivors to reclaim their lives and build a sustainable future. The remarkable journey of **Ssemakula (not real name)** stands as a powerful testament to the transformative impact of our livelihood interventions, offering a beacon of hope for many others.

In 2021, Ssemakula endured severe **torture** and illegal detention for eleven months at the hands of security personnel allegedly due to his political inclination. During his ordeal, his motorcycle, which was his sole source of income as a boda-boda rider, was confiscated and never returned to him. His wife was forced to sell all their household items to sustain the family.



Upon his release, he faced severe physical, psychological and social challenges; he suffered immense physical pain, nightmares and flashbacks; he avoided being among people and stayed in isolation; and he was continuously neglected and stigmatised by the community. Semakula was enrolled for ACTV services in 2022; he was provided with intensive medical care and psychological counselling to address his physical and psychological challenges. However, he continued suffering from episodes of psychological relapse, and he depended on well-wishers to get food and other basic needs. ACTV recognised the need for Semakula to be enrolled into the livelihood interventions as a sustainable measure to help him complete his rehabilitation cycle. He was given business inputs and he established a business dealing in farm produce. He expanded the business and bought a motorcycle and resumed his boda-boda business as well. This strategic intervention enabled him to foster self-reliance, rebuild his family, and overcame the recurrent traumatic relapses.

His own words encapsulate the depth of this transformation: “People had written me off, I avoided any village meetings, and everyone looked at me as a failure, something that would traumatise me. Look at me now! I have a business, I own a motorbike. Nowadays my family can’t make decisions without my say, because I now matter. It’s all because ACTV believed in me and provided me with support that enabled me to rebuild my life and overcome the trauma I was experiencing. I can now take care of myself and my family.”

This story is an inspiration in connection with how targeted livelihood support, combined with comprehensive psychosocial care, can empower torture survivors to transcend past trauma, achieve economic stability, and reintegrate into their communities with dignity and purpose.



Photos 73–77: A graduation and handover of start-up packs to survivors trained in tailoring skills in Kampala.

2.7. Legal aid Services

2.7.1 Improving access to justice and promoting rights

Justice for survivors of torture and violence is a fundamental cornerstone of total healing; survivors achieve satisfaction when they see that their tormentors have been held accountable and fully punished for their actions. In 2024, ACTV contributed to improved access to justice for survivors of torture and violence through the provision of professional legal aid services that included legal advice, case follow-ups, field investigations, legal awareness, prison visits and medico-legal documentation. A total of 448 (311 male and 137 female) survivors were provided with legal aid services, and of these, 270 (179 male and 91 female) were newly enrolled for the services.

Table 12: Summary of the legal aid services offered to SOTs in 2024

| Service | Number of participants | | Total |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------|----------|
| | Male | Female | |
| Legal aid advice | 311 | 137 | 448 |
| Field investigations | | | 09 |
| Case follow-up | 07 | 08 | 15 |
| Referrals | 49 | 04 | 43 |
| Watching briefs | | | 02 cases |

Successful case in 2024

1. **Lutaaya Mohammed v. Attorney General and 6 Others (Miscellaneous Cause 256 of 2021) [2024] UGHCCD 131 (20 August 2024)** was successfully. In the case, the allegations of torture were proved on the balance of probability and the first respondent was ordered to pay the applicant **UGX 50,000,000 and costs of the suit.**
2. Sumaiya Saidi Lutaaya v. Attorney General (Civil Appeal No. 25 2014).
3. Uganda v. Alituha Mildred (Criminal Case No. 60 of 2023).

A survivor's story of inspiration



A survivor's journey to justice in a courtroom – The case of SE (not real name)

In September 2023, SE, a 6-year-old, had his arms tied with ropes and pieces of timber, before being deliberately set ablaze and burnt and locked up in a garage for several days. She was rescued by the neighbours who later reported to the police. The perpetrator was arrested by the Uganda Police Force and a case file, No. CRB No. 115 of 2023, was opened. SE was in severe pain, with the hands becoming infected. A child human rights activist referred her to ACTV for rehabilitation services. SE was enrolled for medical care and a legal team was set up to follow up the case. The legal team conducted a field investigation and collected the required evidence for the case, including the medico-legal report that was shared with the police and the Resident State Attorney (RSA). A charge of aggravated torture contrary to Sections 4 and 5 (a) and (h) of the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act, Cap. 130 was preferred and taken before the Chief Magistrate's Court of Hoima District. ACTV was granted permission to watch brief and attended all the court hearings. After a long period of court proceedings, on 30th October 2024, the Chief Magistrates Court of Hoima delivered a landmark verdict, finding the perpetrator guilty and a conviction was handed down accordingly. This was a source of happiness for the survivor and the family as they saw that justice had been attained.



2.7.2 Prison visits

In 2024, ACTV conducted outreach programmes in 10 prisons across Uganda, reached out to a total of 618 (543 male and 75 female) alleged survivors of torture, and also raised awareness among 1,679 inmates (1,444 male and 235 female) about human rights, the right to freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act, Cap. 130, and the available reporting mechanisms for survivors. In a bid to strengthen ACTV capacity in prison monitoring, 20 staff were trained and mentored on monitoring the conditions of prisons. Furthermore, 20 prison staff from the Central Region were trained on Initial Medical Assessment (IMA) to enable timely identification of torture cases within prisons and provide a mechanism for the provision of support services.

Table 13: Summary of the prison visits conducted in 2024

| Name of Prison | Survivors reached | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| UG Prison Kasangati | 49 | 9 | 58 |
| UG Prison Muinaina | 82 | | 82 |
| UG Prison Kaweeri | 35 | 2 | 37 |
| UG Prison Kigo | 76 | | 76 |
| UG Prison Luzira Women | | 31 | 31 |
| UG Prison Luzira Murchison Bay | 109 | | 109 |
| UG Prison Kitgum | 61 | | 61 |
| UG Prison Pader | 48 | 7 | 55 |
| UG Prison Patongo | 21 | | 21 |
| UG Prison Lira (Main) | 62 | 26 | 88 |
| Total | 543 | 75 | 618 |

2.7.3 Medico-legal documentation

To improve access to medico-legal documentation in the country, a network comprising of 39 (23 male and 16 female) volunteer professionals, including medical doctors, lawyers, nurses, psychologists and social workers was established. The network will play a key role in investigating and documenting cases of torture following the Istanbul Protocol guidelines (an international tool used to investigate and document cases of torture). The network was able to develop a total of two medico-legal reports providing crucial evidence for legal proceedings.

Table 14: The volunteer network members trained

| Profession | Male | Female | Total |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Medical doctors | 8 | 7 | 15 |
| Clinical officers | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Lawyers | 7 | 7 | 14 |
| Psychologists | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Social workers | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 23 | 16 | 39 |

Table 15: Volunteer network members trained by region

| Region | Male | Female | Total |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Central | 04 | 08 | 12 |
| Western | 05 | 02 | 07 |
| Northern | 08 | 02 | 10 |
| Eastern/ Karamoja | 06 | 04 | 10 |
| Total | 23 | 13 | 39 |

**Photo 78:** Network of medico-legal professionals trained by ACTV.

2.8. Building a Stronger and More Resilient Organization

2.8.1. ACTV @30 celebrations

ACTV on the 12th April 2024 held its 30th anniversary under the theme: “Celebrating 30 years of rebuilding lives of survivors of Torture”. During the anniversary, a fundraising campaign was carried out to mobilise resources for the construction of the ACTV state-of-the-art rehabilitation centre (Ukarabati Centre). The function was attended by ACTV well-wishers, development partners and government officials.

Table 16: Capacity development trainings carried out in 2024

| Training | Staff attending | Location | Facilitator |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Training on integration of gender-based violence prevention and response in programming | Kampala Programme Staff | Kampala | Consultant |
| Training on global rehabilitation standard for survivors of torture | ACTV Kampala Medical Doctor | Nairobi | IRCT |
| Training of trainers (TOT) for PM+ intervention | Kampala Mental Health Staff | Nakuru | DIGNITY |
| A workshop on documentation and monitoring CSO legal operating environment | CAO | Kampala | NCHRD |
| Training of staff on basics of project management and their role in monitoring and evaluation through the implementation cycle | ACTV Gulu and Kaabong Staff | Gulu and Kaabong | ACTV |
| Training of staff on digital security and safety | All Staff | Online | ACTV |
| Training on medical legal documentation | ACTV Holistic Team | Kampala | Consultant and ACTV |
| Training on effective leadership and staff performance management | ACTV Management | Kampala | Consultant |



ACTV @30 celebrations



Photos 79 -87: The ACTV @30 celebrations

3.0 Trends of Torture and Violence among Alleged Survivors Registered for ACTV services in 2024

Table 17: Number of survivors registered for ACTV services at our centres

| ACTV Centre | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Kampala | 394 | 205 | 599 |
| Kasese – Field Office | 92 | 31 | 123 |
| Gulu | 366 | 346 | 712 |
| Karamoja | 290 | 208 | 498 |
| Total | 1,142 | 790 | 1,932 |

Figure 1: Trends recorded per month in 2024.

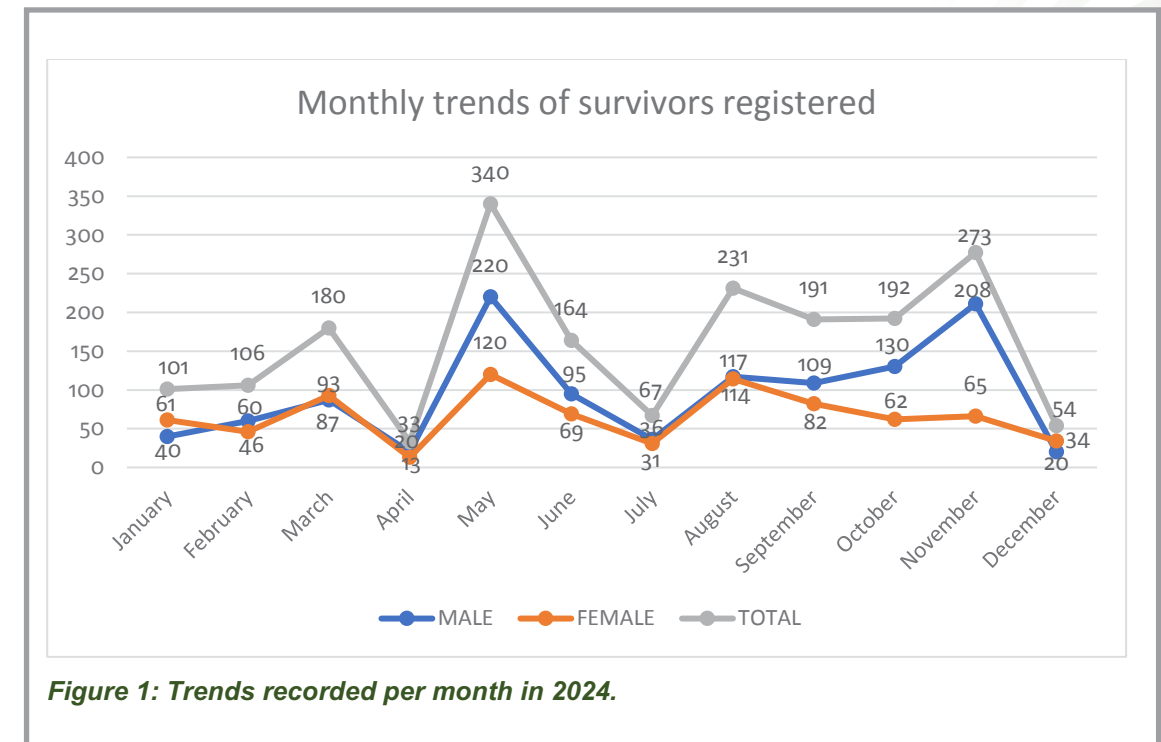


Figure 1: Trends recorded per month in 2024.



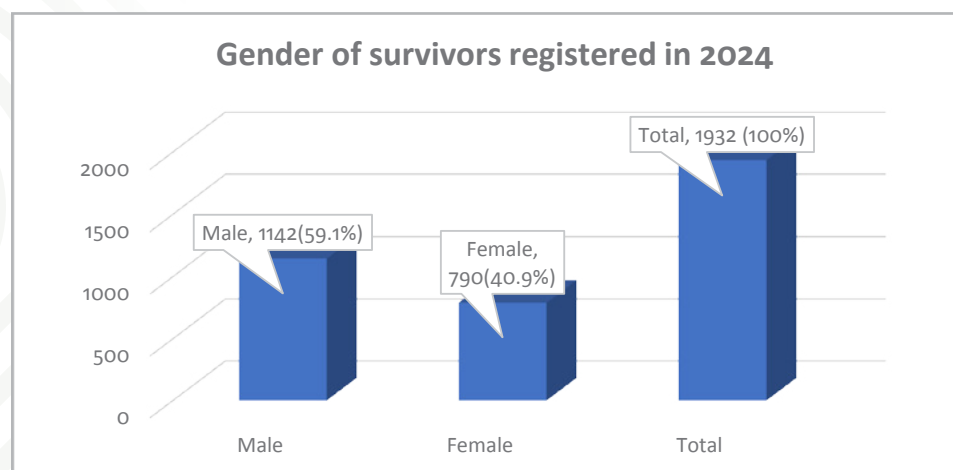
Photos 88 –95: ACTV staff and the Board members during the annual planning retreat at NIKAN Hotel.

Table 18: Trend for the four ACTV strategic years, 2021 – 2024

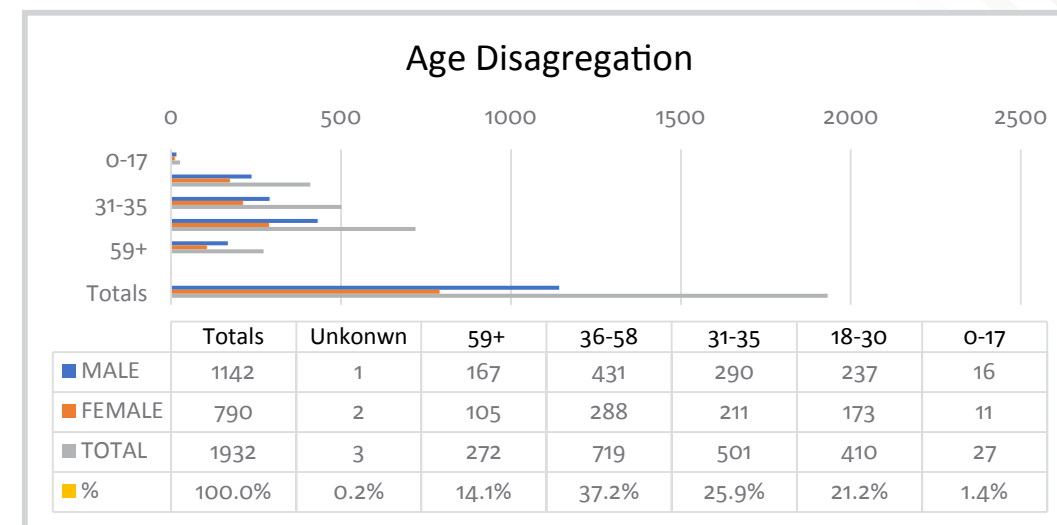
| ACTV Centre | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | Total |
|-------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Kampala | 396 | 269 | 324 | 599 | 1592 |
| Kasese – Field Office | 79 | 10 | 83 | 123 | 295 |
| Gulu | 472 | 221 | 593 | 712 | 1998 |
| Karamoja – Field Office | 204 | 298 | 235 | 498 | 1235 |
| Total | 1,151 | 798 | 1,235 | 1,932 | 5,116 |

A total of 1,932 (1,142 male and 790 female) survivors of torture and violence were registered by the ACTV service centres in 2024 in Kampala, Central Region, Gulu, Northern Region, Kasese, Western Region, and in Kaabong, Karamoja Sub-region of Uganda. There was a significant increase of 56.4% in the number of survivors registered in 2024 compared to those registered in 2023. This was mainly attributed to the expansion of ACTV interventions in the Karamoja Sub-region and in the Central Region, increased awareness through sharing of unsolicited messages to the public, and expansion of the community support network volunteers that referred survivors for services. In addition, there were continued acts of torture and violence in the Karamoja Sub-region due to the disarmament and anti-stock theft operations, as well as increased cases of GBV and land conflicts in Central and Northern Uganda.

Gender disaggregation for survivors registered in 2024

**Figure 2: Gender of the registered survivors in 2024.**

Males accounted for 59.1% (1,142) of the survivors registered, while 40.9% (790) were female. It is important to note that there was a 2.9% increase in female survivors compared to those registered in 2023. The increase in female survivors is due to the targeted interventions, including home visits, community outreach and community support volunteers. These activities contributed to building trust and confidence for female survivors to come up and seek services from the different ACTV centres.

Table 19: Age categories of the survivors registered

The majority (37.32%) were aged 36 – 58 years, which is the adult and productive age range. However, the youths aged 18–35 years constituted 47.1%. Furthermore, children aged 0–17 years were 1.4%, with 27 survivors. It should be noted that the majority of Uganda's population are aged below 36 years, which requires that focus be put on mitigating the risk of them being tortured, which will largely affect their contribution to the development of the country.

Nationalities of survivors registered

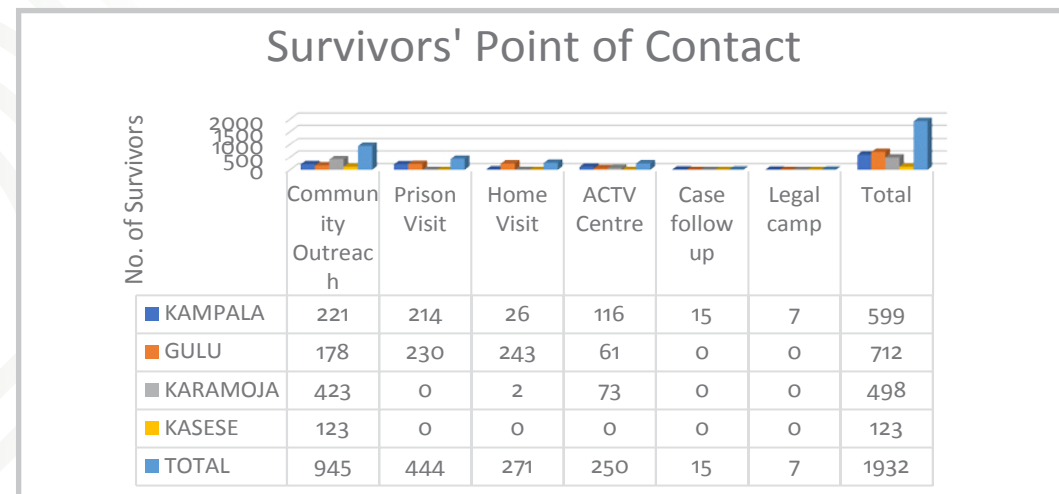
Table 20: Nationalities of survivors registered

| Nationality | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Uganda | 1,124 | 770 | 1,894 |
| DRC | 5 | 10 | 15 |
| Rwanda | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| Burundi | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Somali | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Ethiopia | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Sudan | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Liberia | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Eritrea | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Niger | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 1,142 | 790 | 1,932 |

Among the survivors registered, 1,894 (1,124 male and 765 female) were Ugandans who were the majority and 38 were refugees and asylum seekers. It should be noted that among the asylum seekers there were two survivors from West Africa, i.e., Niger and Liberia, who had fled their home countries because of persecution and sought asylum in Uganda.

Points where survivors were contacted

Table 21: The point where survivors were contacted



ACTV first contacted the majority of her clients through targeted community outreach (945 survivors), while others were contacted through prison visits (444), and home visits (271); and then there were those that visited the ACTV centres (250) in Kampala, Kaabong and Gulu. With the expansion in Karamoja, more activities were done in communities leading to an increase in the number of clients seen through community outreach.

Table 22: Referral partners that referred survivors to ACTV

| Source | Kampala | Gulu | Karamoja | Total |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Friends/family | 25 | 32 | 19 | 76 |
| Self-referral | 17 | 13 | 41 | 71 |
| ACTV client | 19 | 14 | 1 | 34 |
| Prison officer | 26 | 0 | 0 | 26 |
| Community support network | 14 | 0 | 2 | 16 |
| Human Rights Focus | 0 | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Solidarity | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Refugee Law Project | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| FIDA Uganda | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Centre for Victims of Torture | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Uganda NGO FORUM | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Others | 6 | 1 | 6 | 13 |
| Total | 125 | 72 | 74 | 271 |

The majority of the survivors were referred by their family and friend (76), followed by those that referred themselves (71). This was mainly attributed to the increased trust among communities

and survivors to seek support services after undergoing torture and violence experiences. In addition, there was an increase in media activities that led to an increase in awareness about the available support services. Furthermore, ACTV clients who had received support from ACTV also referred other survivors (34) to receive services. Other referral partners included UHRC, AGORA and political parties. This implies that a multipronged approach has to be adopted in order to improve access to rehabilitation.

Alleged perpetrators of torture and violence

Table 23: Alleged perpetrators of torture

| Perpetrator | Kampala | Gulu | Karamoja | Kasese | Total | % |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Security Agencies | | | | | | |
| Uganda People's Defence Forces | 78 | 178 | 432 | 43 | 731 | 35.9% |
| Uganda Police Force | 232 | 137 | 20 | 36 | 425 | 20.9% |
| Unknown | 28 | 11 | 6 | 22 | 67 | 3.3% |
| Prison officers | 21 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 32 | 1.6% |
| CMI | 20 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 1.0% |
| Katikiros | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0.6% |
| UWA | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0.4% |
| Flying Squad | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0.2% |
| KCCA - Law enforcement Officers | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.1% |
| Sub-total | 389 | 351 | 459 | 104 | 1303 | 64.0% |
| Non-Security Agencies | | | | | | |
| Private individuals | 261 | 53 | 20 | 11 | 345 | 16.9% |
| LRA | 0 | 153 | 0 | 0 | 153 | 7.5% |
| Clan leaders | 0 | 64 | 0 | 0 | 64 | 3.1% |
| Mob justice | 9 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 2.1% |
| Local Council leaders | 0 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0.7% |
| Karamoja warriors | 0 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 10 | 0.5% |
| Private security guards | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0.5% |
| Employer | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Sub-total | 274 | 326 | 29 | 11 | 640 | 31.4% |

| Other Regions (Refugees) | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| M23 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0.1% |
| ADF rebels | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.1% |
| Sudanese Army | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.1% |
| Kenya soldiers | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Burundian police | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.0% |
| DRC soldiers | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Niger Gov't officials | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Sub-total | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0.5% |
| GBV Perpetrators | | | | | | |
| Husband | 7 | 40 | 15 | 8 | 70 | 3.4% |
| Wife | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 0.3% |
| Brother | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0.1% |
| Stepson | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0.1% |
| Father | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Sub-total | 9 | 49 | 17 | 8 | 83 | 4.1% |
| Total | 683 | 726 | 505 | 123 | 2037 | 100.0% |

The majority of the alleged perpetrators were security agencies, constituting 64% (1,303) among the registered survivors. The UPDF had the most cases alleged against them, at 35.9% (731), with most of the allegations coming from the Karamoja Sub-region, where there are ongoing military operations on disarmament and cattle rustling. The Uganda Police followed with 425 (20.9%) cases alleged, mostly from Central Uganda. It is important to note that there were security operatives that could not be identified by the survivors as they had not been wearing uniforms. Other security agencies included the Prisons Service and Katikiros, with 32 and 13 cases, respectively, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), KCCA law enforcement, the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI) and the Flying Squad. Furthermore, 31.4% (640) of the allegations concerned non-security agencies, and persons acting in private capacity formed the majority of the alleged culprits, with 16.9% (345), and this was mostly in the context of land conflicts and other cruel acts in family disputes. There were 153 survivors (7.5%) that were still suffering from the long-term effects of the LRA war. Other non-state agencies included clan leaders, Local Council leaders, and private security guards; and there were also cases of mob justice. In addition, there were allegations of torture perpetrated by foreign governments (11); and others were cases of gender-based violence (83) that happened in the survivors' home.

Table 24: Reason for torture as given by survivors

| REASON | Kampala | Karamoja | Gulu | Kasese | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|----------|------|--------|-------|
| Punishment | 132 | 178 | 81 | 38 | 429 |
| Forced confession | 147 | 98 | 70 | 7 | 322 |
| Extraction of information | 98 | 20 | 130 | 15 | 263 |
| Intimidation | 67 | 138 | 39 | 14 | 258 |
| Disarmament process | 0 | 3 | 245 | 0 | 248 |
| Sowing fear | 114 | 66 | 0 | 8 | 188 |
| Rebel atrocities | 0 | 137 | 0 | 0 | 137 |
| Humiliation | 54 | 29 | 50 | 3 | 136 |
| Unknown | 51 | 18 | 12 | 23 | 104 |
| GBV | 9 | 49 | 17 | 8 | 83 |
| Ethnic clashes | 0 | 80 | 0 | 0 | 80 |
| Destruction of personality | 19 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 32 |
| Mistaken identity | 9 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 28 |
| Dispersing social gathering | 1 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 19 |
| Extortion | 0 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 13 |
| Election violence | 1 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 12 |
| Forced eviction | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Discrimination | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Land wrangles | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |

Punishment, forced confession, extraction of information and intimidation, respectively, were the major reasons given by the survivors as to why they were tortured. There were a high number of survivors that were tortured in the context of the disarmament process in Karamoja, instilling fear and instigating gender-based violence, among others, as noted in the table above.

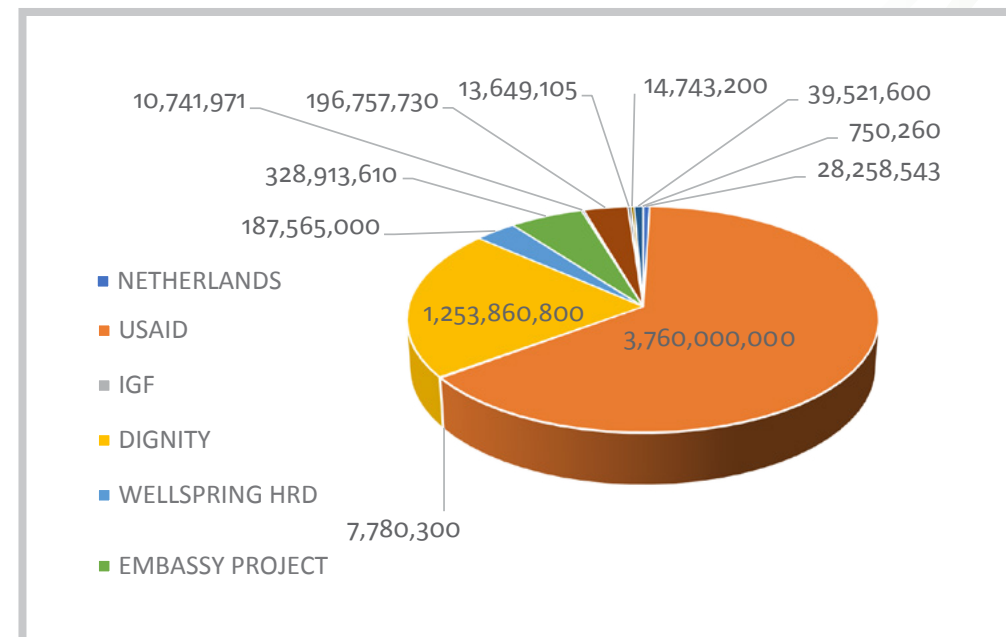
Table 25: Forms of torture survivors went through

| Methods of torture and violence | Kampala | Gulu | Karamoja | Kasese | Total |
|---|---------|------|----------|--------|-------|
| Physical Methods | | | | | |
| Beating (blunt trauma) | 577 | 661 | 489 | 114 | 1841 |
| Exposure to poor conditions of detention | 5 | 9 | 99 | 4 | 117 |
| Positional torture | 17 | 50 | 42 | 6 | 115 |
| Crush injuries | 25 | 4 | 31 | 12 | 72 |
| Sexual torture | 12 | 15 | 37 | 0 | 64 |
| Penetrating injuries | 13 | 21 | 23 | 4 | 61 |
| Asphyxiation | 3 | 4 | 28 | 0 | 35 |
| Chemical exposure | 10 | 0 | 5 | 17 | 32 |
| Burns | 7 | 2 | 18 | 2 | 29 |
| Deprivation of normal sensory stimulation | 1 | 4 | 11 | 0 | 16 |
| Electric shocks | 4 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 15 |
| Psychological Methods | | | | | |
| Threats | 62 | 85 | 64 | 5 | 216 |
| Humiliation | 29 | 33 | 57 | 21 | 140 |
| Witnessing torture of others | 14 | 58 | 57 | 5 | 134 |
| Accentuating feelings of helplessness | 44 | 51 | 1 | 0 | 96 |
| Behavioural coercion | 9 | 6 | 18 | 2 | 35 |
| Pharmacological torture | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 7 |
| Sexual torture | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |

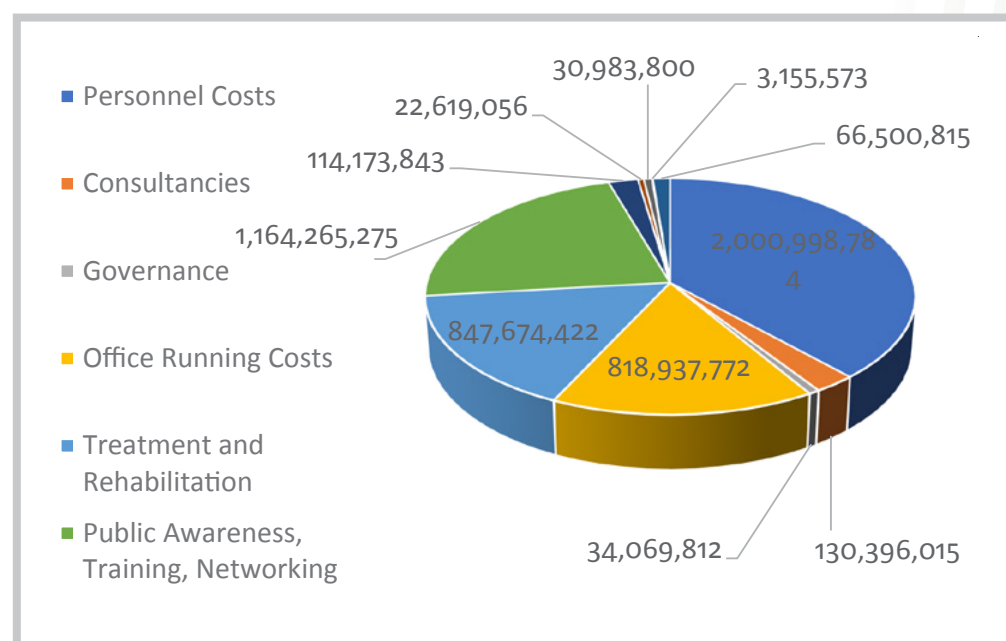
Physical torture was used on most of the survivors registered, with beating resulting in blunt trauma being the highest in number (1,841), followed by exposure to poor conditions of detention and positional torture, respectively. Threats, humiliation and witnessing others being tortured formed the majority of the psychological methods. Sexual torture was among the other methods that were used in the course of torture and perpetration of violence, as reported by the survivors registered in 2024.

4.0 Financial Report

INCOME



EXPENDITURE



5.0 Challenges, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

5.1. Challenges

There is a high level of bureaucracy among government institutions that led to delays and cancelling of some activities. In addition, the bureaucracy led to the failure to sign MOUs in some districts.

Survivors of torture and violence continue to live in fear due to the absence of the Witness Protection Act. This has continued to be a hindrance for them to receive support and to hold the perpetrators accountable.

There is still a knowledge gap about the application of the PPTA among criminal justice actors, which calls for further capacity building so as to realise effective justice for survivors.

The high backlog of cases in courts and the UHRC, including cases of torture, has increasingly led to frustration and loss of hope for justice among survivors.

5.2. Lessons Learnt

Inception meetings on areas of operation to introduce new projects and programmes, as well as signing of MOUs with the relevant stakeholders, increases stakeholders' participation in the project, gives security to implementers, and increases ownership and sustainability, which eases implementation.

The integration of technology tools in rehabilitation, mobilisation, advocacy and engagement is cost-effective and widens the reach of information about torture prevention, projects and services.

Involvement of the community through the community support network volunteer model improves help-seeking behaviour among survivors and leads to the provision of timely support.

The establishment of professional networks is necessary to integrate torture prevention and response in the professional's routine services as a driver of increased access to rehabilitation services and justice for survivors. This has been evidenced by the successes achieved on medico-legal documentation by the network of lawyers and doctors, and on torture investigation and reporting by the network of journalists.

5.3. Recommendations

Incorporate technology and digitalisation in advocacy and rehabilitation processes to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

Continue the capacity-building and dialogue interventions with government entities, including criminal justice actors, as we head into the 2026 general elections.

Continue advocating for the Witness Protection Act, Legal Aid Service Providers Act, OPCAT and the National Policy on the Rehabilitation of Survivors of Torture and Violence.

Widen fundraising opportunities to ensure that there is continuous funding to implement the activities and to support the vulnerable survivors of torture and gender-based violence.

ACTV Staff in 2024

New Staff Recruited

Gloria Kabwama, Fundraising Coordinator
 Juliet Assiimwe Nanyondo, Human Resource Coordinator
 Godfrey Ogena, Project Coordinator – USAID Stop Torture Activity
 Dr. Jackline Eunice Ojok Auma, Medical Doctor, Gulu
 Jackson Madaya, Clinical Psychologist, Kampala
 Jackline Ajok Obot, Clinical Psychologist, Gulu
 Linda Prossy Enon, Clinical Psychologist, Kaabong
 Allan Collins Mpewo, Legal Assistant, Kampala
 Kevin Lochoto, Legal Assistant, Kaabong
 Doreen Namataka, Social Worker Assistant, Kampala
 Julius Okello, Physiotherapist, Kampala
 Andrew Lokaye, Medical Clinical Officer, Kaabong
 Ayub Mayiga, Research and Documentation Officer
 Joshua Mukasa, Driver, Kampala
 Mary Beatrice Locham, Administrative Assistant, Kaabong
 Joyce Lakop, Office Attendant, Gulu
 Dr. Nazifah Namatovu, Part-Time Medical Doctor, Kampala

Staff Promoted

Isaac Ogwal, Programme Manager, Kampala
 Dr. Portia Busingye, Ag. Medical Coordinator, Kampala
 Esther Kyakuhairu Muzoora, Ag. Social Worker Coordinator, Kampala
 Albina Lochora, Social Worker, Kaabong
 Patrick Bosco Oola, Social Worker, Gulu

Staff That Left ACTV

Dr. Joel Ochora, Medical Doctor, Gulu
 Juliet Anango, Legal Coordinator
 Dr. Sulaiman Nsanja, Part-Time Medical Doctor, Kampala
 Morris Muhindo, Field Office, Kasese

Deceased Staff

Nicolas Engwau, Project Manager, Stop Torture Activity (MHSRIP)

Other ACTV Staff

Samuel Herbert Nsubuga, Chief Executive Officer

Sophia Achan, Head of Finance and Administration

Alex Kigoye, Head of Programmes

Alfred Okettayot, Programme Manager, Gulu

Grace Namatovu, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager

Thomas Aquinas Lokol, ICT Administrator

Dan Lubinga, Accountant

Leila Wakabi Hassan, Mental Health Coordinator

Baker Isabirye, Counselling Psychologist, Kampala

Jordan Megolonyo, Legal Officer, Gulu

Nancy Ayebare, Legal Officer, Kampala

Beatrice Acayo, Social Worker, Gulu

Mary Nabwogi, Social Worker, Kampala

Andrew Olwedo, Physiotherapist, Gulu

Paul Kirya Mukalere, Communication and Advocacy Officer

Brenda Mary Kemigisa, Communication and Advocacy Assistant

Susan Labeja, Nurse, Gulu

Angella Kunihira, Nurse, Kampala

Robinah Nabatanzi, Accounts Assistant, Kampala

Augustine Nkurunziza, Accounts Assistant, Gulu

Edina Atimango, Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant, Gulu

Benon Kanyanzira, Office Attendant, Kampala

Santos Okaa, Driver, Gulu

Ronald Lubega, Driver, Kampala

Solomani Mukeka, Field Officer, Kasese

Emmanuel Risa Bole, Project Field Officer, Kaabong

Volunteers

Milton Bageni, Kasese Field Office

Babirye Tendo, Finance, Kampala

Winnie Nakiwolo, Nurse, Kampala

Ivan Odur, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gulu

Serge Basedeke, Monitoring and Evaluation, Kampala

Ntawiha Jalilah, Administration, Kampala

Constance Ichuma, Communications and Advocacy, Kampala

Board Members**Board Chairperson**

Mr. John Livingstone Okello-Okello

Members

Dr. Juliet Nakku

Ms. Sayson Rossette Meya

Mr. Jackson Katende Semakula

Reverend Canon Augustine Musiwuufu Magala

Secretary

Mr. Samuel Herbert Nsubuga

6.0 Appreciation Message to our Partners

We extend our gratitude to our invaluable partners and donors for your generous contributions, which were instrumental in allowing us to pursue our vision of a World Free from Torture and creating a meaningful impact in the lives of survivors of torture, gender-based violence and other forms of violence. We appreciate the incredible financial and technical support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Danish Institute Against Torture (DIGNITY), the Wellsprings Philanthropic Fund (WPF), the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT), the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands donors, Omega Research Foundation, and the International Rehabilitation Council for Victims of Torture (IRCT), among others. Your belief in our work is a powerful motivator, and we are committed to continuing to advocate for a world free from torture and extend the lifesaving support to the most vulnerable and marginalised persons who suffer from the devastating effects of torture and violence.



**AFRICAN CENTRE FOR TREATMENT AND
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