

Mid-term evaluation of the VOT project

Dr. Sylvestre . BARANCIRA,
Nathalie. ZAJDE Nathan,
Karine.KANEZA,
Bindende. KAMWANGA,

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List of acronyms

ABDP : Burundian Association for the defense of Prisoners Human Rights

Art : Article

APFB : Association for the Promotion of the Burundian Girl

APRODH : Burundian Association for the Protection Prisoners' Human Rights

ASF : Lawyers Without Borders

CSE : Conception, Monitoring and Evaluation

CCT : Convention Against Torture

CVR : Truth- Reconciliation Commission

E.U. : European Union

GR : Global Rights

IHRLG : International Human Rights Law Group

LI : ITEKA League

MSF : Doctors Without Borders

OHCDHB : Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi

SFCG : Search For Common Ground

THARS : Trauma Healing And Reconciliation Services

USAID : (United States Agency for International Development)

VOT : Victims Of Torture

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OBJECTIVES OF VOT PROJECT

VOT project has a four-bound ambition :

1. Provide psychological healing to victims of torture,
2. Support the social reintegration of the victims
3. Provide assistance in legal proceedings
4. Realize a preventive advocacy

The « VOT » integrated project on victims of torture in Burundi has the following overall objective: **“The reduction of negative effects of torture by assistance to victims and the prevention of acts of torture in Burundi.”**

The achievement of such an objective needs a multi-disciplinary intervention, involving the whole of the competences of a certain number of organizations that operate already for the construction of peace, healing traumas, the organization of community and advocacy in favor of human rights.

In the organization of the VOT project, Search For Common Ground is identified as the permanent executing organization that plays the role of KEY COORDINATOR of different activities.

Introductory definition: torture

The notion of torture as defined in the VOT projects and understood by the beneficiaries is in fact extremely vast. It refers to the notion of **injustice** (in the family, at work); to the notion of ill treatment (home, in the streets, at work); to the notion of torture as defined in the 1984 **Convention against Torture**; to the notion of **physical aggression** by **rebels**. Actually, it refers to the whole of damages incurred by the population in their everyday life and particularly since the turmoil. It is true that, due probably to the current situation in Burundi, the population that benefits from the VOT project are victims of a multitude of aggressions, which are poorly taken into account by the deprived and ill-organized national organizations.

GLOBAL CONTEXT

Burundi is a landlocked country with a population of almost 6.4 million inhabitants on an area of 27.834 Km², and appears to be one of the most densely populated African countries.

Being in war for more than ten years, Burundi broke records in human rights violations, as testify publications by some international human rights organizations, among which is Amnesty International.

The Arusha Accord signed on the 28th of August 2000 has been the first outline of a peace and national reconciliation program. As a matter of fact, diverse commissions and draft bills aiming at the promotion and the protection of human rights and peaceful conflict resolution have been planned for by the Accord.¹

Even though torture has not been the object of any particular commission in the Accord, one notes a preoccupation in the mind of the initiators of the Accord in the sense that the latter provides for a commission for international judicial inquiry, for which the mission will be to highlight crimes that define Burundian history from independence to the signature of the Accord. Also, it provides for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) for which the mission will be to investigate all crimes committed since 1962, save genocidal crimes, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. A hypothesis would be to deduce that the CVR would have to investigate on acts of torture committed in Burundi.

Lastly, Burundi ratified in 1992 the Convention Against Torture. However, the government has not yet elaborated and transmitted the initial report on the situation in Burundi. This report is due one year after the ratification of the convention by each member country.

The peculiar situation of transition and setting up of conflict prevention mechanisms calls for the conception and the implementation of projects like VOT under the impulsion of local and international organizations.

¹ The Commission for International Judicial Inquiry, the Truth-Reconciliation Commission and the International Penal tribunal, art 6 and 8 of the Arusha Accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi.

CONCEPTION AND INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK OF VOT PROJET

In the terms of the Convention against Torture and other pains or cruel inhuman or degrading treatments, torture is “any act by which a pain or acute sufferings, physical or mental, are deliberately inflicted on a person by the public service agents or on their instigation notably in order to obtain from her or from a third party information or confession, to punish her for an act she committed or that she is suspected of having committed or to intimidate her or intimidate other persons.”

Torture is never limited to police cells or prisons, but is also committed in refugee camps, in the streets, and within families. The different forms of torture are physical torture, sexual violence, and psychological torture.

If in most cases the effects of physical torture disappear with time, the whole of the victims suffer from deep psychological symptoms that include depression, panic, and a deep anxiety during their life. Also, the experience of torture induces the appearance of social stigmas and rejection by the surrounding environment. An efficient response against torture requires two parallel approaches that block on the one hand the negative effects of torture and prevents practice of such acts by a state on the other hand. In response to the effects of torture, protection, a secure environment, and the possibility of physical and psychological healing must be bestowed on the victims. That facilitates the access to justice for victims and their reintegration within the communities.

Prevention of acts of torture calls for a common action from groups of human rights advocates in order to raise awareness among the population on torture, document and publish cases of torture, and finally advocate for greater empowerment and less impunity.

It is in that framework that the VOT project was born within Search for Common Ground (SFCG). SFCG coordinates that project with various partners: Law Group (presently Global Rights), Iteka League, THARS, and APRODH.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Institutional framework/arrangement

To implement VOT, SFCG has established a partnership with three other institutions with diverse competences:

- THARS - Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services (Non-Profit Organization officially registered in Burundi, specialized in trauma healing and reconciliation.
- GLOBAL RIGHTS (Law Group) Non-Governmental Organization specialized in legal assistance and advocacy for human rights.
- Ligue ITEKA, Burundian Organization for the Defense of Human Rights affiliated with IFHR, specialized in identification of victims through a network of observers who operate throughout the country.

VOT aims to serve the largest number possible of Burundian victims of torture and/or involved in support to victims of torture throughout the whole country. To date, VOT has created 6 "antennas," which are provincial offices that centralize VOT actions at the level of each region.

The targeted provinces are the following:

Bujumbura, Ngozi, Gitega-Karuzi, Ruyigi-Rutana-Cankuzo, Makamba, Muramvya-Mwaro. Those different provinces welcome displaced, repatriated, or regrouped people.

Total number of persons who contacted VOT

And registered in activity reports of the 4 partner institutions of the project- all activities considered.

SFCG	2922
THARS	3792
GLOBAL RIGHTS	330
ITEKA	2327
Total	9371

I. Provide psychological healing to victims of torture²

The psychotherapy monitoring of the victims is mainly the responsibility of THARS and is handled by "psychological assistants" and the "psychological counselors."

The "psy" staff is composed of **28** psychotherapists in total.

² Data collected from VOT files early March 2004.

Psychological Counselors	7
Psychological Assistants	21
Total	28

A. Training VOT psychotherapists

The psychological counselors bearing a university degree are **3** in number. The other psychological counselors - 4 in number - have no university diploma in psychology but have followed one or several professional trainings financed by SFCG, THARS, and other organizations present in Burundi.

The psychological assistants are **21** in number and most of them have a primary level of instruction. They have also received a short training organized by THARS and SFCG. The majority of the psychological assistants are persons who have a certain level of maturity, acknowledged by their community, and belong to a religious group/church from which they borrow healing methods to cure victims of VOT.

Types of training received

The trainings are of variable duration - between a half-day and 2 weeks. They are related to trauma, its psychological definition, its psychopathological, psychophysical and psychosocial implications, as well as the therapeutic techniques centered mainly on listening to the clients. Some have received a brief training on psychiatric classification (DSM IV of l'APA nosography and CIM 10 of WHO).

Documentation for training in psycho-trauma

THARS realized documentation in the form of an illustrated journal, flyers, and texts in Kirundi, French, and English that aim at disclosing information on psychological trauma to a great number of people.

In 2003, Peggy PARSONS and David NIYONZIMA of THARS consequently created a manual «Trauma and Healing Manual », which summarizes the psychological and physio-pathological approach to psychological trauma on which the various teachings provided by the VOT consortium are based.

Summary of the trauma theory adopted by THARS in trainings

The theory adopted by THARS claims that the majority of human beings have been sexually traumatized during childhood, but that trauma has been repressed. Hence, the traumas incurred during adulthood are pathological inasmuch as they revive the childhood trauma.

The trauma healing theory presented by THARS is based on a definition inspired by, then largely simplified, propositions of trauma functioning of

Freud³ and Ferenczi⁴: The mind of a person is a wonderful thing with many parts that work together to help us live and enjoy our lives. One part of the mind is the Storyteller. The Storyteller keeps the history of our lives. As our lives unfold, the Storyteller keeps up the flow of our thinking, telling the tale as we live it. But sometimes things happen that are too much for the Storyteller. Some things are too terrible to be put easily into words. At times like this it is needful for the Storyteller to go to sleep so that we can simply act, in order to survive. But we do not forget what happens when the Storyteller is asleep because another part of our mind is fully awake. This part is the Keeper of Nightmares. The Keeper is very strong, and quick and smart. The Keeper will guide us to do whatever we have to do to stay alive. The Keeper also remembers what happens, but these memories are kept in the form of pictures, sounds, and smells, and they are stored in the basket of nightmares.

When we are safe, the Storyteller wakes up and the Keeper of nightmares tries to get the Storyteller to hold the memories that are in the basket. He sends dreams, nightmares, feelings, and pictures to the Storyteller. But the Storyteller does not want to accept them as true, because he was not there when these things happened. This struggle leaves the person very confused, and the person may feel like they are going crazy, they may not want to talk about the struggle. The person can help end the struggle by sitting down with another person or with a group of people, and telling the whole truth and reconciling the two parts of the mind.

When we tell our stories out loud to a person who cares about us and cares about our struggle, then the Storyteller will listen. And the story is accepted and placed into the basket of the Storyteller, then the Keeper of the nightmares can relax and be at peace and the struggle will end.

Different therapeutic techniques are taught. They aim essentially at "giving voice to the traumatized", to "allow the narration of the traumatic event", to "be expressed and become aware of one's repressed emotions and feelings". Those techniques aim, in theory, at "freeing" » the patient of his/her symptoms, at giving up his/her drives of revenge, and finally at "forgiving" his/her aggressor in view of social reconciliation.

This type of teaching and content has as theoretical grounding, the following:

Genuine healing of a psychic trauma would engender a final stop of the infernal cycle of violence and revenge-the end of the repeating process.

Technique utilized in every day practice

The psychological counselors and assistants interviewed, some of whom hold a university degree, all admit using in practice concepts and techniques borrowed from the Christian religious universe.

³ Freud, 1895, 1898, 1905, 1915.

⁴ Ferenczi, 1913, 1931, 1934.

Comments

Resorting to a religious therapy brings into question the interest of the psychological theory that is taught, considering it does not seem to allow a deep treatment of recent traumatic events, heal present sufferings, and take into account the perpetrators of the aggression and their motives.

B. Opening counseling centers

The listening centers have been opened in the various antennas of the project in the provinces of Bujumbura, Ngozi, Gitega-karuzi, Ruyigi, Makamba, Muramvya and Mwaro. The listening centers are offices held by psychological assistants - open every day in principle, but in reality when the psychological assistants are available - who welcome the victims and listen to their complaints, assist and/or guide them.

Total number of counseling rooms: **25**

C. Psychotherapy for victims of torture

1. Total Number of victims registered in the psychotherapy frameworks

SFCG	140
THARS	308
Total	448

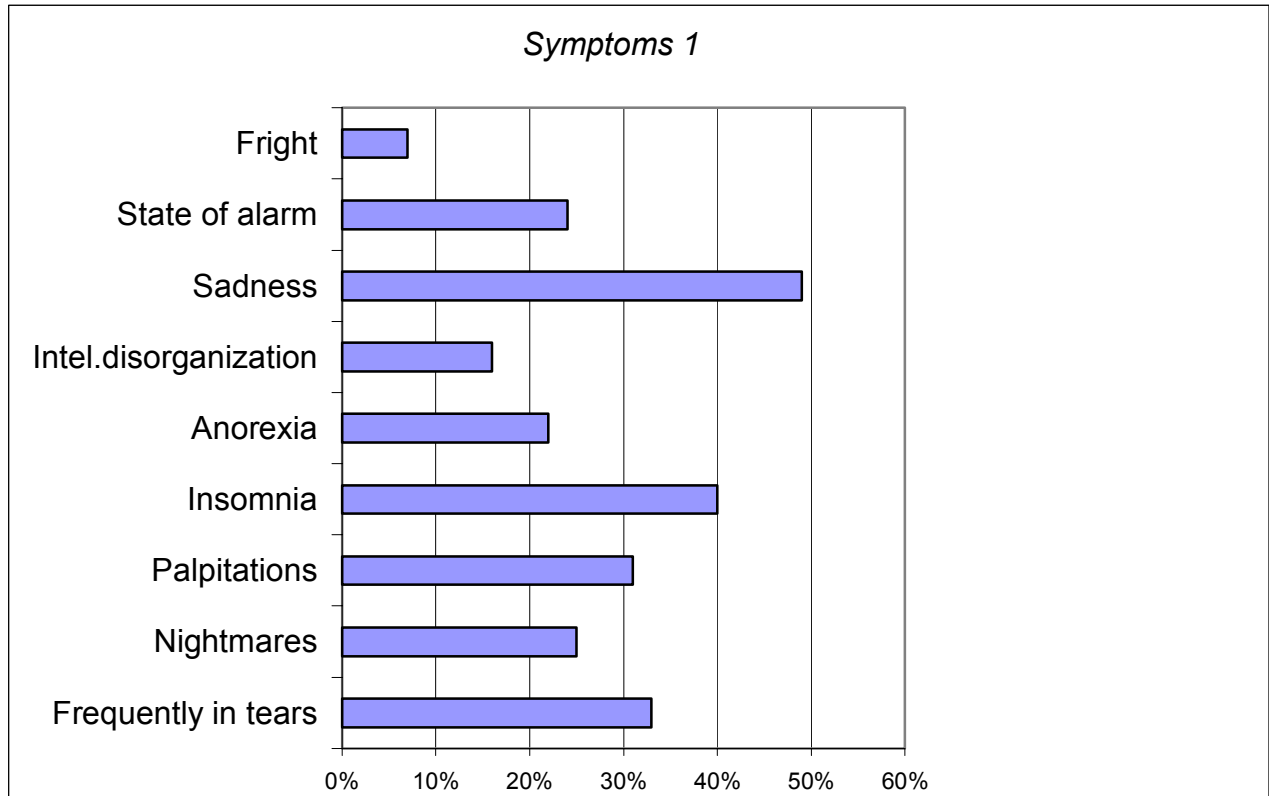
2. The psychopathology of victims who consult VOT

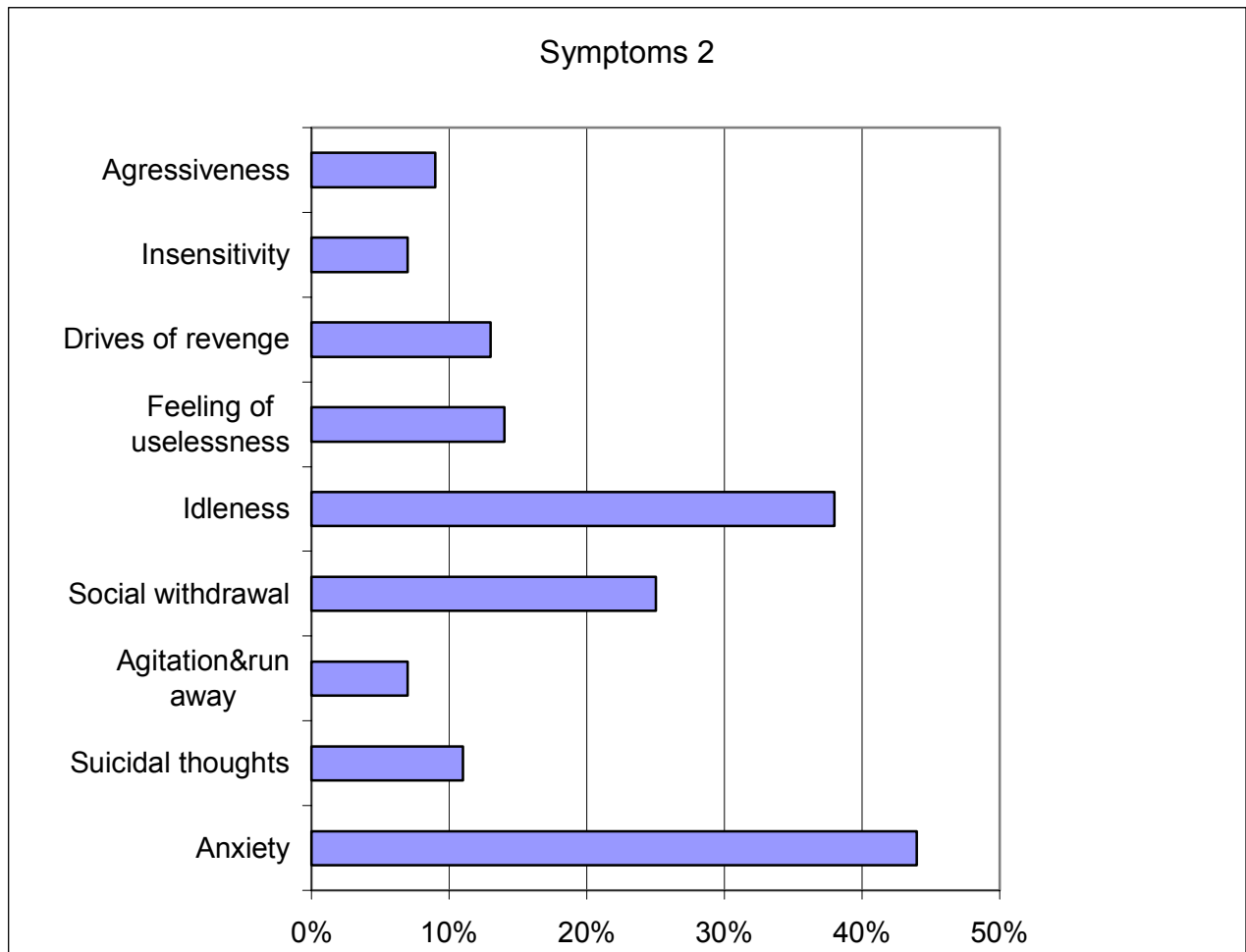
The results presented below have been elaborated from survey interviews with a population of 55 patients - victims of torture - selected by their psychotherapist. The selection criteria of the patients by their psychotherapist for this evaluation are the following: 1. Confidence established between the patient and his/her psychotherapist 2. Willingness to participate in the evaluation 3. The desire to benefit from an additional psychological counseling session for the patient. 4. The patient's availability 5. His/her transportation ability 6. His/her capacity for dialogue and comprehension.

In effect, the statistics displayed below present a strictly qualitative interest and cannot therefore give way to systematized conclusions.

Statistics calculated on N=55; namely 12% of the total number of victims participated in psychotherapy.

Sadness : 49%, Anxiety : 44%, Insomnia : 40%, Idleness : 38%,
Frequently in tears : 33%, Palpitations : 31%, Nightmares : 25%, Social
withdrawal : 25%, State of paranoiac alarm : 24%, Anorexia : 22%,
Intellectual Disorganization : 16%, Feeling of uselessness : 14%,
revenge drives : 14%, Suicidal thoughts : 11%, Aggressiveness: 9%,
State of fright : 7%, Running away and agitation : 7%, Insensibility :
7%.





Comments

The symptoms in the first chart belong indeed to the clinical picture of PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), very clearly associated with the nervous breakdown picture. However, a deep discussion on the real causes of the disorders and a reflection on the specifically psychological notions peculiar to the Kirundi universe are imperative.

3. Modalities for the psychological assistance

VOT suggests three different psychological devices/frameworks

- a) Individual counseling
- b) "Memory Healing"
- c) Support groups

It is noted that each victim can if she/he wishes so, benefit from the three frameworks.

a. Individual counseling

The psychotherapist welcomes the victim, asks him to narrate the experience of his trauma and his present psychological distress. The

psychotherapist expresses then his/her comprehension toward the victim, and tries to empower him/her through psychological and listening skills. When the patient presents symptoms too serious for the psychotherapist's treatments, he/she is directed to the neuropsychiatry center in Bujumbura.

b. "Memory Healing"

It is a session that lasts a whole day, supervised by a psychologist, and regrouping about twenty victims of torture - children and adults, men and women. The psychologist explains in Kirundi the definition of torture, different types of torture, and the psychosocial consequences.

To make herself well understood, the meeting facilitator has a board on which she writes the different special terms she uses (the DSM clinic board translated in Kirundi). On one section of the board hung realistic posters displaying individuals undergoing different types of torture: tied up in the back, beaten, etc. A small documentary, about five minutes long, showing for example a young adolescent girl with maimed hands (during the Sierra Leone massacres), who tries to survive with her handicap- is screened in order to explain explicitly what is expected from the participants: public and bold testimony of the damage underwent and their perpetrators and make a genuine account of the medical and social consequences of torture in personal life, express freely their emotion and indignation, say what they need mostly at present: psychological support, medical support, legal support.

Taking turns, and encouraged by the psychologist, each stands up before the assembly and narrates his experience of torture showing the maimed parts of his body. The supervisor draws the attention of the participants on the similarity of sufferings, hence encouraging sharing by speech, experiences of traumas. At the end of the day, the psychologist distributes to each a piece of paper on which the participants are invited to write the one or more terms drawn on the board and designating the aftereffects or the problems that they wish to get rid of. After that, they all stand up and while singing a song started by the facilitator "Gira Amahoro mu Mutima" (May your heart get peace); they tear the pieces of paper into smaller pieces that they scatter on the ground. The meeting ends when the psychologist is through with giving appointments to each in accordance to their needs and to the services offered by VOT- *Memory Healing* being one of the framework to count and guide cases of torture.

The theoretic suggestion accounted for in "Memory Healing" claims that psychological healing of trauma occurs through speaking and sharing.

To date, **5 sessions of "Memory Healing"** have taken place.

c) Support groups

A support group pulls together victims of torture who share the same problem: raped women, tortured because of war, handicapped, etc. The principle is grouping regularly around thirty people and start group discussions on specific sufferings that the victims underwent, for example, for the group of people maimed during war, one of the themes that were discussed has been the trauma due to explosion, the shock of the noise and the vivid vision of scattered parts of the body. That type of group has a two-fold objective: 1. Free expression of heavy affects and representations related to the trauma ; 2. The emergence of resources and complaints from the victims themselves.

To date, **34 support groups** have been created.

5 victims associations- raped women and physically handicapped- encouraged by VOT, have been created in 2004.

Comments

A deep reflection needs to be undertaken on the therapeutic techniques of the religious sphere (prayer and hands imposition), as an efficient response to the states of post-traumatic stress. As a matter of fact, those techniques are extremely widespread in everyday practice by counselors and psychological assistants to cure and support the victims.

II. Support in social reintegration of the victims

The support program to the social reintegration of the VOT victims defines a victim of torture as a being that is socially vulnerable due to prejudices and rejection that he creates in his/her community and family because he/she has been tortured or raped.

VOT is meant to be a reeducation program at the national level in order to induce behavior change within the population.

- Accept the victims
- Establish solidarity
- Give up violence

In that respect, VOT has realized 2 series of complementary actions. :

1. Disseminate information on the VOT project to a large public within the different targeted provinces and a campaign against stigmatization of the victims in the Burundian society.

2. Sensitization-training sessions on the psychopathological consequences, the psychosocial, and legal implications of the torture and

the identification of volunteers to whom responsibility will be given to support closely the victims.

1. Number of persons who benefited from information on the VOT project

SFCG	2406
THARS	3792
Total	6198

2. Number of persons - community leaders - who benefited from sensitization on torture.

SFCG	376
THARS	542
GLOBAL RIGHTS	306
Total	1224

The sensitization sessions pull together each time an average of 30 people chosen among community leaders: leaders of associations, home administration officials, members of the judicial body, identified victims, nurse and doctors, representative of religious denominations, teachers, women's associations, and youth networks.

The disseminated information concerns the VOT project, torture, and the consequent trauma as well as the legal status of torture. Those sessions provide the VOT staff an opportunity to identify and recruit on a voluntary basis, people who are potential volunteers and could support the realization of the project within the population.

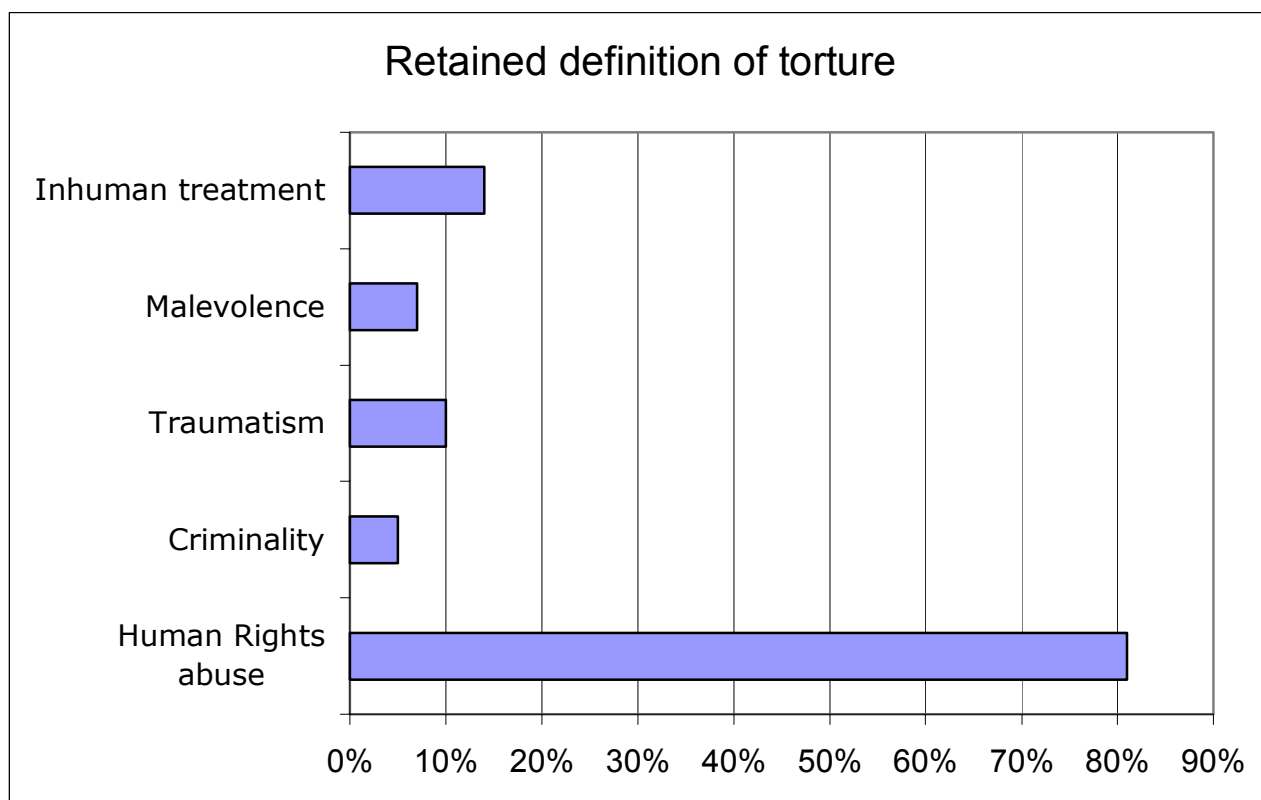
Results of the sensitization sessions

What do the people having participated in sensitization sessions know?
What information do they transmit for their part?

Data collected within 58 focus groups that grouped 580 beneficiaries of sensitization sessions and correspond to 47% of the population having been sensitized in the framework of VOT.

1. Definition of Torture

For 81% of focus groups, torture is the fact of flouting human rights. For 14% of focus groups, torture is a degrading and inhuman treatment; For 10%, it is a trauma; For 7 % it is malevolence; For 5%, it is a crime.



Comments

Community volunteers suggest a general and human rights based definition of torture. This answer seems to show that the concepts and discourse channeled by international bodies have been adopted; however, it can be seen that for sensitized people, torture includes an extremely vast series of facts, events, and damage undergone in everyday life, that go largely beyond the international definition (see the 2 following graphs).

2. Retained types of torture

- 57% retain rape as a type of torture
- 48% retain injustice as a type of torture
- 43% retain physical torture as a type of torture
- 38% retain expropriation as a type of torture

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34% retain psychic torture, theft and looting as types of torture

14% retain massacres, assassinations and discrimination against raped women as types of torture

14% retain unfair imprisonment as a type of torture

12% retain slander

10% retain destruction of houses and goods

9% retain polygamy and divorce

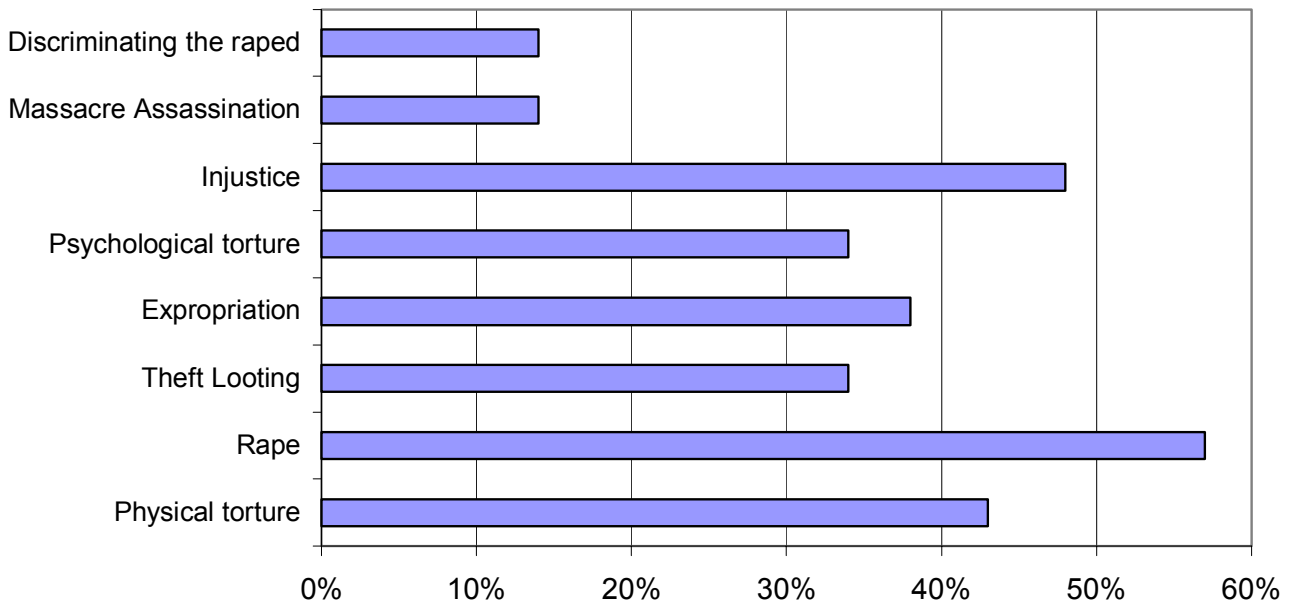
9% retain the fact of being a displaced person

5% retain the fact of being handicapped and without help while in distress

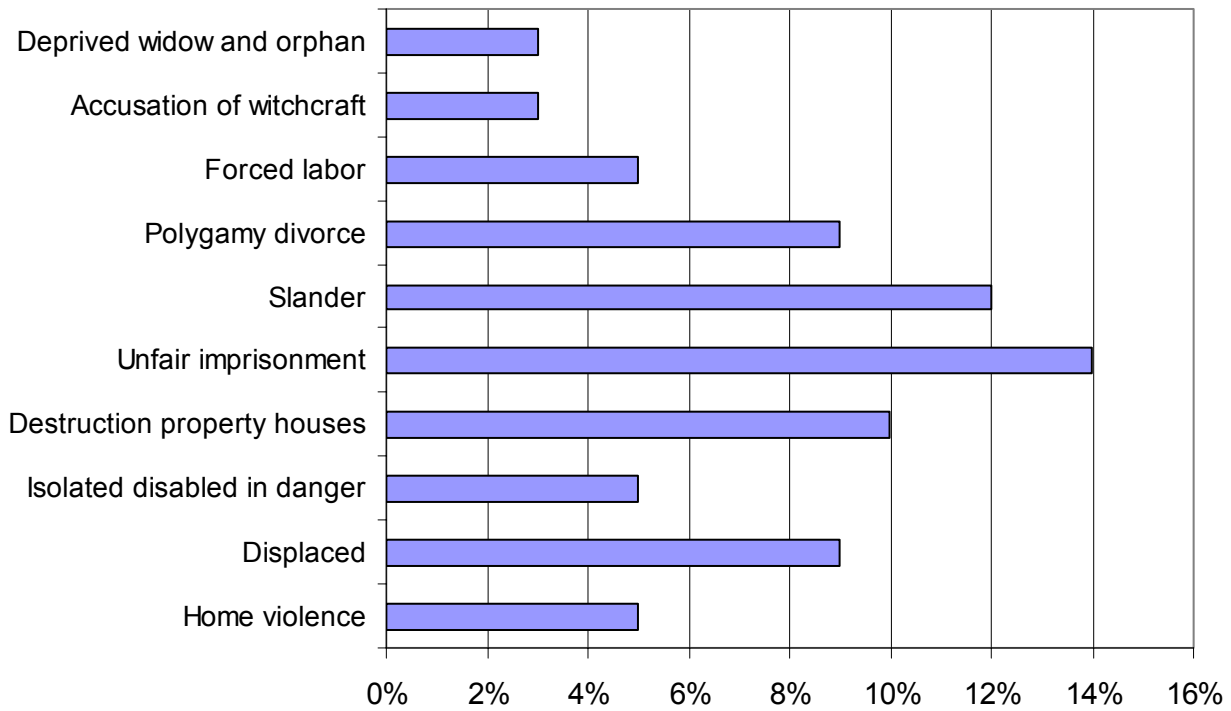
3% retain the fact of being a deprived widow or orphan

3% retain the fact of being accused of witchcraft

Retained types of torture 1



Retained types of violence 2

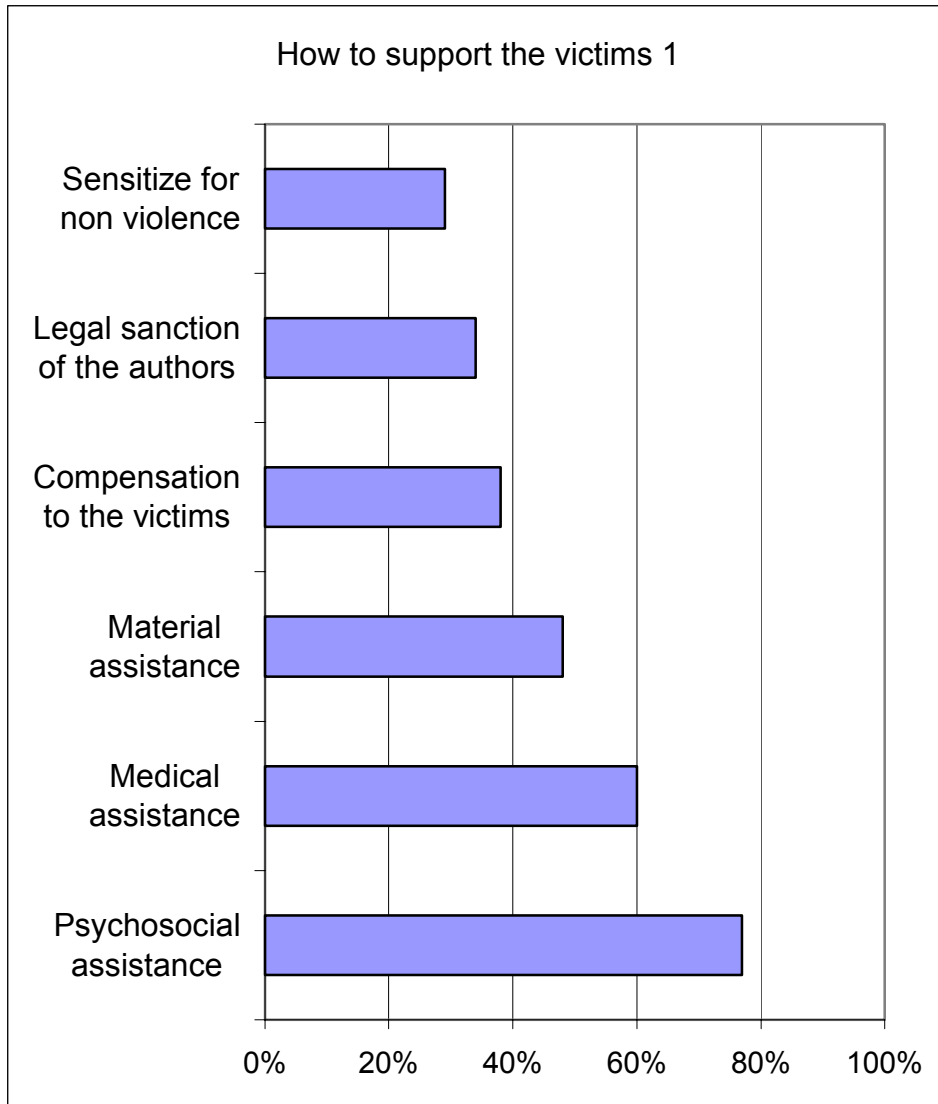


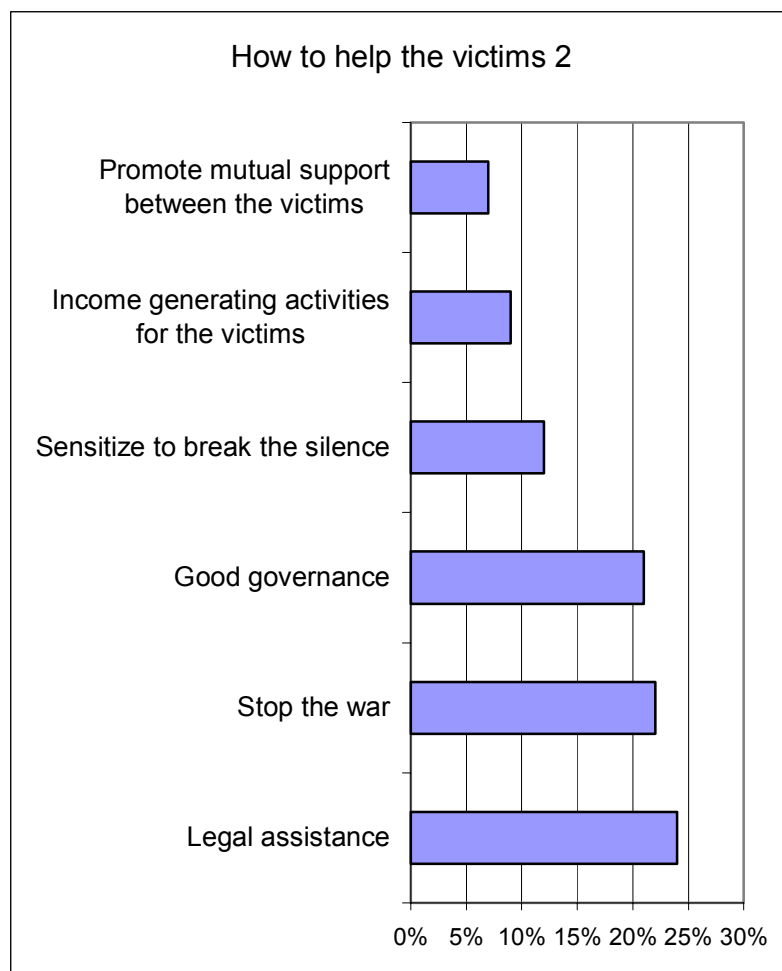
Comments

The recalled definitions show that the beneficiaries of awareness-raising sessions have retained a large range of definitions of torture. It should be remembered that the definition retained for VOT goes largely beyond the one proposed by the New York Convention; here, it is definitely vaster and one would expect the "victims of torture" thereby defined, to ask to VOT, support of a material, medical, financial, social, legal and psychological nature. Put differently, the community volunteers hereby share the spectrum of problems that Burundians face. This means that in such a context, they conceive of VOT as a framework of which the mission is to solve almost the whole series of actual difficulties of contemporary Burundian society.

3. Types of support to bring to victims of torture

77% : psychosocial support; 60% : medical assistance; 48% : material assistance; 38% : compensation; 34% : legal punishment for the authors; 29% : sensitize for non violence; 24% : judicial assistance; 22% stop the war; 21% : good governance; 12% : sensitize the victims to break the silence; 9% : initiate income generating activities for the victims; 7% : promote mutual support between the victims.





Comments

Here, by saying what are the needs of the victims of torture from their point of view, the community volunteers confirm, the large definition they give (see previous graph). Let us note the insistence on the need of material support, the financial and legal compensation in the process of support to the victims of torture.

With regard to the definition retained by the sensitized community volunteers, a victim of torture is a person who has lost his/her capacities to participate in the development of his community and who becomes above all a burden for his/her family or group, because of his mental or physical handicap or the loss of his property. It is for those reasons that the victims are rejected and not for moral reasons.

Therefore, social reintegration of the victim of torture goes necessarily through enhancing his/her economic and financial capacities.

Public Identification of victims of rape

44% of the interviewed victims, namely, 77% of women, are victims of rape.

Rape is not a novelty, rather is particularly frequent in situations of war and upheaval. To be a raped woman implies that one unwillingly had sexual intercourse. For married women, it implies that one had intimate relations with a man other than one's husband. In either case, rape is a blot for all women. The questions that arise are therefore the following: How does the society to which the raped woman belongs define blot by rape? How does the Burundi society repair or suppress it?

In relation to that issue, the proposals accounted for in the VOT program that come from western countries, would better consider the resources of the Burundian practices in healing rape.

Also, it would be good to think about the effects of encouraging women to give public testimony of having been raped and to identify oneself to that new condition. Hope to receive financial support from international organizations has encouraged raped women to reveal themselves publicly and in so doing they incur the risk of being discredited in their community and family. It should be noted that not revealing openly that one has been raped does not mean that rape will remain unpunished or otherwise not addressed by Burundian society.

III. Provide guidance in judicial proceedings

The legal assistance is given to victims of torture in order to promote justice and help the victims in self-rehabilitation and recovery of their dignity.

The process of that assistance consists of identifying the victims of torture, providing them counsel and legal assistance, paying the victims and eye witnesses transportation fees to the place of the process as well as judicial fees.

The partner organizations of the VOT project who deal with the legal assistance are the following:

- Global Rights GR in short, formerly "International Human Rights Law Group", IHRLG which is a non governmental organization regrouping legal and human rights professionals engaged in advocacy, training and defense strategies in human rights.

Global Rights provides legal counsel and assistance to the victims of torture by way of its mobile legal clinics. Also, GR informs the victims of torture on the different legal prosecution processes.

- ITEKA League and the Burundian Association for the protection of Human Rights and Prisoners (APRODH) contribute to legal assistance by identification, orientation, denunciation of facts, visits, and regular monitoring of the files of prisoners who are victims of torture. What is peculiar about APRODH is that this association provides assistance that is oriented in most cases to the prisoners.

SFCG works in close cooperation with GR and IL.

Data related to legal assistance⁵

In Bujumbura, out of the 166 cases identified in the Central Prison of Mpimba, 9 files have been transferred to judicial authorities by the LI coordinator of the VOT project. Also, national lawyers assist and legally represent the victims of rape and torture on behalf of VOT project. To date, four national lawyers monitor 15 files. GR has also ensured transportation and legal fees to 32 victims of torture and sexual violence.

As far as Ngozi is concerned, 10 victims had their transportation secured and 24 others (of unknown aggressors) have been assisted legally by Global rights. Also, 110 Para-Jurists from three communes have been trained by Global Rights on three main themes: medical assistance, psychological, legal, and judicial assistance to the victims. Nine victims of unknown aggressors have been oriented by those Para-jurists.

In Ngozi, 11 victims are assisted legally by lawyers. Also, another partner, APRODH of which two observers have just taken up office three months ago has accounted for 12 cases of torture and rape. Finally, from interviews with Iteka League observes, the latter having stressed on the fact that observation and denunciation of acts of rape and torture formed already part of their duties before the VOT project was established, have also affirmed they have oriented 10 cases of rape and torture towards the VOT project agents.

As far as Ruyigi is concerned, the absence of Global Rights affected badly the legal assistance. Henceforth, transportation for the 35 victims identified by SFCG has been secured by the latter.

As far as identification is concerned, 85 cases of rape have been accounted for by Iteka League from Ruyigi hospital, (from June 2003 to October 2003). Also, 19 cases of torture have been identified as well among the 181 persons heard by Iteka League and APRODH agents during their November 11th 2003 field visit.

Comments

The victims identified by the five organizations (Global Rights, THARS, Iteka League, APRODH and Search for Common Ground) through their agents are oriented according to their needs and the areas of intervention of the partners.

For example, Iteka league initially took care of medical assistance, which often comes before legal assistance. To date it is SFCG that takes care of that. The victims are henceforth oriented towards different services by psychological helpers, community leaders (THARS, GR), community volunteers and facilitators (SFCG), observers (LI), and Para- jurists (GR)

When the victim is legally assisted, Global Rights provides him with legal counsel she/he needs, notably when it comes to the victim's file constitution in case he/she lodges a complaint with the police. The results of a medical expertise in

⁵ Data collected from VOT at the end of March 2004.

case of rape for example. In case of torture, the doctor's report contributes to starting recourse to justice by the victim in view of repair and punishment of the crime.

LI and APRODH intervene on behalf of prisoners in the identification, guidance and monitoring of files during judicial inquiry and investigation. Contrary to LI, APRODH is also in charge of prisoners and eyewitnesses' transport as well as the payment of judicial fees.

The number of victims identified so far is 855⁶. Even though that figure goes beyond the initial figure of 800 victims, the effective legal assistance requires improvement, both at the level of investigation and introduction of the files to courts and tribunals and that of sensitizing the population on the necessity to resort to justice.

It appears quite relevant to us to underline the particular context of Burundi, which is in war for more than ten years. That context renders the implementation of the VOT project particularly difficult. As a matter of fact, cases of rape and torture are numerous in the areas that are particularly affected by war (regions where rebel bands operate at times) and the traumatized population resists too much to denouncing the criminals.

Other obstacles hinder full success in the global assistance. As a matter of fact, if one recalls one of the main expected results: allow an accelerated process for justice in favor of the victims, that result is affected by the following obstacles: the slowness of the judiciary machinery due to long distances to cover while the police officers have no transportation means, poor cooperation from some medical doctors and legal illiteracy of the victims. Also, when the latter are cured, they often do not feel the need to lodge a complaint against their torturer on the one hand for fear of revenge from the latter and on the other to turn as rapidly as it is possible that page of their life.

One possible solution would be the reinforcement of training sessions, which are organized for the para-jurists so that they can raise the awareness of the future and potential victims on the slowness of the judicial system and help them to understand the different advantages and obstacles of legal action. It would be important, for example, to inform the populations on the difficulty in enforcing some laws that seem to protect their rights.⁷

Another solution would be that partner organizations establish a card of constitution for lawyers, to enable the victims' regular representation and reduce consequently the slowness of the process and protect them from any kind of pressure.

Setting up an informal framework for exchange and meeting between representatives of the police corps and the judicial body and all other actors would offer an opportunity to raise critical issues like the necessary involvement of the agents of the judicial police and the judicial body for a better management of justice.

⁶ Analysis of the data bank of the VOT project ;

⁷ Bill n.1/015 dated 22/09/2003 on attributing repressive competence to High Authorities tribunals in civil matters.

The point of view that reinforces that proposal is among other things the scarcity of proceedings taken by victims to the judicial authorities while cases of rape are more frequent⁸.

The theory of healing the psychological trauma of the victims adopted by VOT program has a three bound dimension: Psychological, legal, and socio-economic.

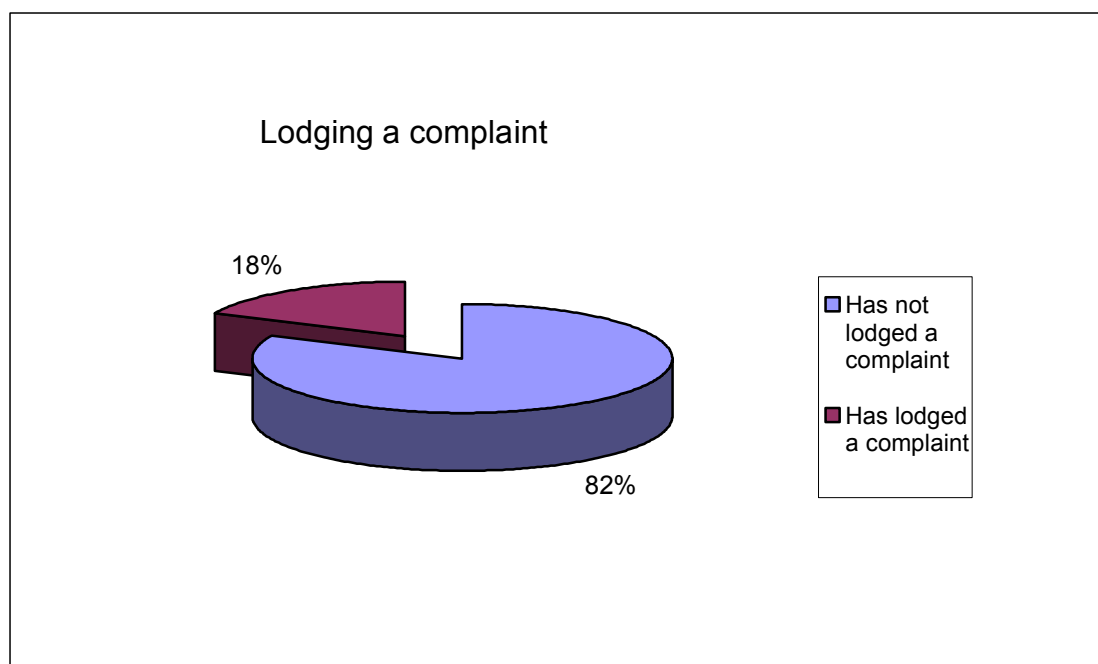
It claims that the psychological healing of a person who has been victim of torture must necessarily be sustained by actions of the legal domain. It requires among other things the following:

- a. Public identifying and indexing of the aggressor
- b. The sanction of the guilty
- c. Financial compensation of the incurred damage

All those actions depend on lodging a complaint before the tribunal. VOT offer judicial assistance by availing a lawyer, transportation of the victim and the eyewitnesses as well as medical guidance to seek proofs and testimonies (medical certificate of initial damage).

Results and comments

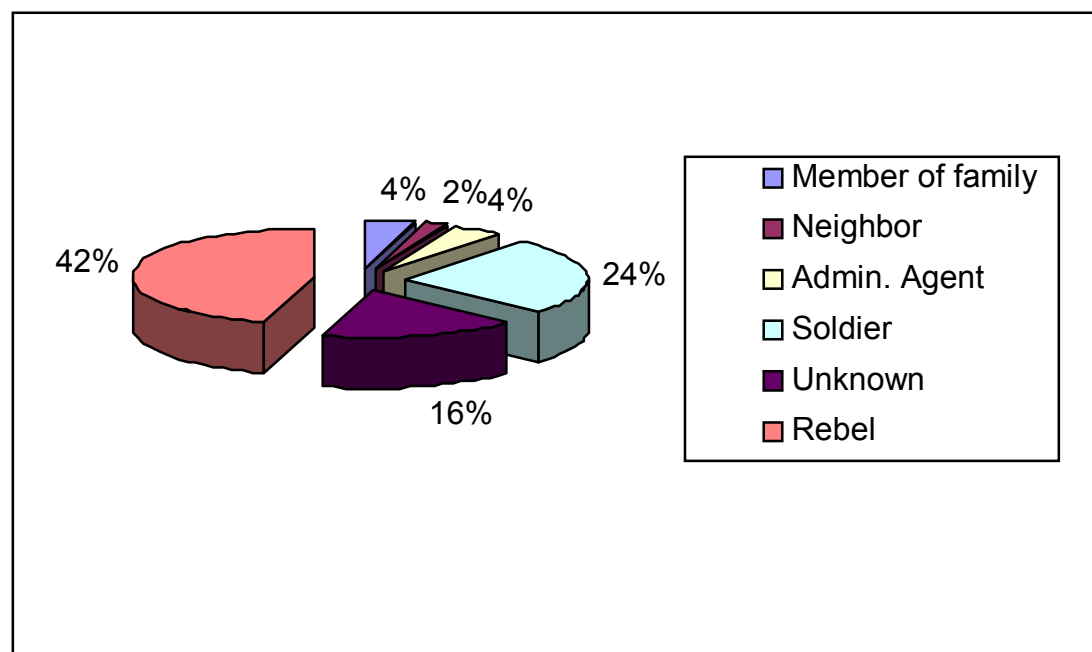
Out of the 55 patients surveyed, only 18% have lodged a complaint.



⁸ Views collected from the President of the High Authority Tribunal in the Mayorship of Bujumbura, 7/04/2004 and data collected from the office of the High Authority Tribunal according to which 35 cases for rape and indecent assault have been brought before the tribunal from January 2003 to January 2004.

1. Public identification and indexing of the aggressor

Survey on 55 victims reveals that the majority of aggressors are rebels (42%), soldiers (24%), and unknown (16%).



Comments

Lodging a complaint against the majority of aggressors is not feasible considering that there is no complaint against X in Burundi. All denunciations must specify the name. Also, when they are known, the aggressors are often powerful people -administrative agents, policemen and household heads. In addition, the fact of requiring the victim to feed himself/herself his/her imprisoned aggressor for fear of seeing him released because police stations cannot afford feeding the prisoners does not encourage lodging complaints.

2. The punishment of the guilty

Denouncing an aggressor to a powerful and recognized institution means inverting the situation. The aggressor, so far powerful and threatening becomes in his turn threatened by the society and public forces through the actions taken by the victim.

When victims are encouraged in the framework of assistance for psychological trauma, to denounce the crime and above all the perpetrator, to lodge a complaint against him when the social system or the legal system does not allow his arrest, trial and conviction, there is a risk of inducing the reinforcement of the initial situation of aggression. The torturer, denounced by his victim but unpunished, would wish to punish or revenge on he or she who dared to threaten him in his freedom. In other words, a theory of healing the torture trauma that puts together denouncement and punishment of the torturer must ensure the

adequate functioning of judicial institutions; otherwise it could endanger the victims and reinforce their trauma by reviving their fright.

3. Financial compensation for the incurred damage

Some of the aggressors are currently sued, some have been convicted for a penal servitude, but little compensation has been established.

IV. Realization of preventive advocacy

Preventive advocacy consists of coordinating all progress made to prevent a resort to torture in the future through documentation, informing the public on abuses, raising awareness of large sectors of the population through a network advocacy by international human rights organizations.

Preventive advocacy is the key responsibility of Global Rights. However, the media side is taken care of through Studio Ijambo of SFCG, even though that does not exclude the fact that other radios might have produced and aired diverse programs related to torture and rape issues.

Data in figures

Sensitization sessions have been organized in partnership with other organizations like APFB (Association for the Promotion of the Burundian Girl) and the network to assist the victims of sexual violence (Lawyers without Borders-SFCG-Global Rights-APFB, MSF, BDA). In Bujumbura, the following places were targeted: Muyira, Kanyosha rural, Musaga, Ruyaga, Mubimbi, Buhonga, Kinama, Kamenge, Bwiza (10 participants), Nyakabiga (11 participants), Kanyosha (50 participants) and Gatumba (more than 100 participants). There presently exist community groups at Nyakabiga, Bwiza and Kinama

In May 2003, Global Rights organized a training session on violence against women in favor of 20 APFB young girls.

Also, 2 legal studies have been conducted.

- a) A legal study on sexual violence.
- b) A legal study on torture.

To date, 2 workshops to validate those studies have been organized. Also, Global Rights has organized 2 main formal sessions of lobbying and advocacy that grouped parliamentarians. The informal meetings and discussions related to the participation of a large and diversified audience had the following results:

- a) The nomination by the Ministry of Justice on the 23rd of March in 2004, of a commission in charge of elaborating a draft bill on penal code reform in view of a more efficient crackdown on sexual violence offenses;

- b) The transmission of a circular note to the Minister of Justice stating on the one hand the request formulated by the high authority courts to increase the rhythm and the number of weekly hearings; and on the other hand the exclusion from the provisional liberty granted to long term prisoners of persons prosecuted for offenses of rape and indecent assault (art 382 to 387 of the penal code).

In Ngozi, on the 26th of June 2003, a first awareness raising meeting was organized. Sensitization field visits took place in all the communes of Ngozi in cooperation with the community leaders and volunteers; 5 training sessions drew together 22 participants from the 10 zones of Ngozi.

Finally, a public sensitization campaign has been organized by SFCG on the whole of the provinces of Ngozi, Ruyigi, and Makamba during a period of 10 days at the occasion of the International Woman's Day.

Preventive advocacy has as objective to train Para-jurists who were ready to re-transmit the acquired training and to assist potential victims. To that effect, 110 Para-jurists have been trained.

As far as Ruyigi is concerned and in the absence of Global Rights, Search for Common Ground organized 11 awareness raising sessions drawing together 236 persons. Here are the topics of those sessions:

- 1) Torture and Trauma,
- 2) Violence against women,
- 3) Assistance to victims,
- 4) Leadership,
- 5) Fight against torture.

The evaluators had also the occasion to collect views and opinions of 2 journalists from RPA and Radio Isanganiro. The latter affirmed they have identified 78 cases of rape since 2004⁹. The two journalists have also monitored and aired cases on which they have surveyed in the cells of the Ruyigi prison -in particular a case of torture by the chief of the Ruyigi zone.

In the sector of audio-visuals, it is also noted the realization of a documentary on cases of rape in Burundi. The documentary contains a series of testimonies from the victims of rape living in the northern quarters of Bujumbura as well as in some provinces, Ngozi among them. It also contains testimonies of victims' parents, some lawyers and certain Burundian associations.

It should be added that from our interviews with the authorities, GR has also elaborated a lobbying strategy at the international level. To date, two representatives of GR have participated in two seminars in Banjul (June 2003) in order to mobilize the international community on the question of torture in Burundi. As a matter of fact, in Banjul the representative of GR asked the Government of Burundi to transmit its initial report on the situation of torture in Burundi. That representative has also called for a greater accordance of national legislation to the Convention Against Torture.

⁹ Views collected from Balthazar MIBURO, journalist at African Public Radio (RPA), Ngozi

Comments

GR strategy consists on the one hand in texts reform through common actions of national and international organizations, and on the other hand, in a change of attitude of the whole of the Burundian population through documentation and publication of cases of torture and violence in radio programs, documentaries and other publications (see achievements by objective).

Even though the VOT project strategy is effective and efficient in achieving the expected results (sensitization of the population, broadcasting testimonies by the media, publications and others,) two aspects seem to be relegated to the background even though they have been mentioned (for example during the last validation workshop).

- 1) Prevention awareness raising and training for civil servants;
- 2) National lobbying for repair of damage experienced by victims.

Even though the majority of interviews with the initiators, it appears that it would be presently impossible to implement the first process, the latter cannot be ignored though if the VOT project aims at rendering the results perennial within the targeted population. As a matter of fact, a strategy to reduce in the long run incidences of torture should be participatory and inclusive of all actors for prevention action at all levels. As far as the second aspect is concerned, it would be judicious to aim at the responsibility of the State and the person convicted of torture on both the moral and material level. Diverse solutions can be thought of:

- Subject to VOT project donors requirements, the establishment of an association of representatives of the police body and within it a project for the reinforcement of the rule of law and human rights. That association would be the result of lobbying, both formally and informally, including certain representatives of the police corps and the judicial body who have expressed interest in the objectives and the activities of the VOT project. The lobbying could also be elaborated on by the VOT project partner local organizations on the impulse of their international partners;
- A larger strategy to mobilize the populations set in the framework of national mechanisms that target national reconciliation like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The objective of that strategy would be a broader definition of sexual violence for example¹⁰; varied objectives would be undertaken among which the most important would be research for a political commitment by the Government to reform laws, and the prevention of torture (through the introduction of a public debate on the crime of torture and its consequences in the framework of the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission), as well as deeper impact within the population on the imprescriptible nature of the crimes of torture and sexual violence.

¹⁰ (Such as expanding the definition of rape by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Court of Justice at the Hague, making rape a crime against humanity.

- An more visible promotion of the VOT project by giving it a name in Kirundi in order to allow identification of the prevention mission of the VOT project;
- Promotion of an awareness raising and training program by the Government of the civil servants at the grassroots level (zone leaders, administrators, peacekeepers, etc....) It should be noted that such a program could emerge from a coalition regrouping different categories of VOT project community groups, (para-jurists, community volunteers, facilitators) and other representatives of the civil society in order to exert pressure on the Government. It should be noted that this program is proposed subject to the project's donor requirements.

Another suggestion would be training directly the victims after their recovery so that they become community volunteers and para-jurists. This approach offers the advantage of reinforcing the victims' capacities and better chances of having a devoted and efficient coordination in the field.

Last, the strategy of intervention aiming at prevention of torture would improve if linked to lobbying for the promotion of moral, physical, intellectual and economic supervision of the victims of rape and torture (like the prisoners in places of detention): extension of cells, building prisons, setting up and maintaining libraries in the places of detention.

Also, it is necessary to undertake income generating activities that can accelerate and increase the process of socio-economic reintegration of the victims like small enterprises of fish farming, pottery, shoe repairing, creation of cooperatives by victim support groups.

V. Project internal Organization

The VOT project, being an integrated project, has a complex structure. Its management complies in general with the dimensions of good management, namely planning, assessing, acting, and reacting.

The project plans the integrated services that the victims of torture might need and puts at their disposal other local actors operating in complementary areas. One peculiar aspect of VOT project is the utilization of resources already existing, both within other SFCG's projects and partner organizations.

The SFCG Women's Peace Center facilitators, GR's para-jurists or else the Iteka League Observers can be cited as an example.

Those particular structures require an additional amount of service from different agents and consequently accrued resources allotted to other programs of SFCG and partner organizations. The principal coordination of VOT project lies on a system of regular monitoring to assess the achievements. A weekly meeting between partner organizations is held under the supervision of the director of the VOT project. Also, there exists in the field coordination between different agents even when the latter belong to different organizations.

One of the observations done by the evaluation team is that the agents of the organizations operate individually with no cross-cutting information exchange all along the assistance to the victims, which act against any cohesion in the intervention process of the project.

It has been noted that the management of the VOT project activities at the level of the partner organizations has no interdependence with SFCG antenna in the provinces but rather with their headquarters in Bujumbura.

It is desirable that the VOT project coordination within a province be carried out by SFCG in the field, in order to get a data bank available at the provincial level.

Also, that system of monitoring needs to be improved by way of an increase in frequency of field visits and the reinforcement of staff capacities.

As far as the "Act and react" dimension is concerned, the latter takes into account the results of the regular monitoring and the analysis of the gaps that normally lead to corrective actions.

The evaluation team has noted the capacity of the main coordination to innovate the structures and mechanisms of intervention and monitoring. The case of APRODH is a good illustration of that dimension when one observes that that association, which intervened at the start as a second plan actor, has become the first plan partner of SFCG nine months later.

- Is there a system of reference that functions effectively and efficiently and how can it be improved?

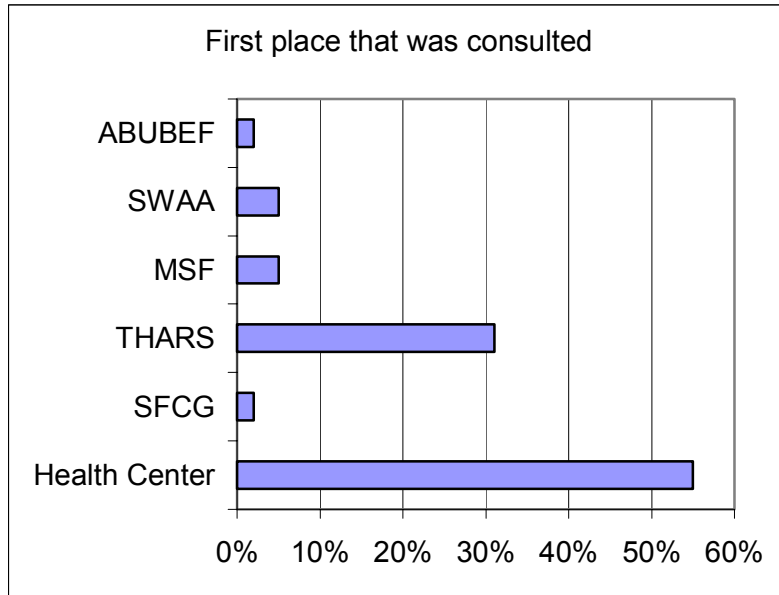
The reference system consists of identifying and guiding the victims by different groups based at the community level: supervisors and community volunteers of SFCG, Para-jurists of Global Rights, psychological counseling of THARS and LI and APRODH observers.

This system requires improvement at the level of intermediary coordination (need to reinforce the organizational capacities of managers who are partners of SFCG within VOT project. The analysis of the SFCG database reveals that 319 cases (35% of the total number) were oriented towards SFCG but whose medical and legal assistance have not been clarified.

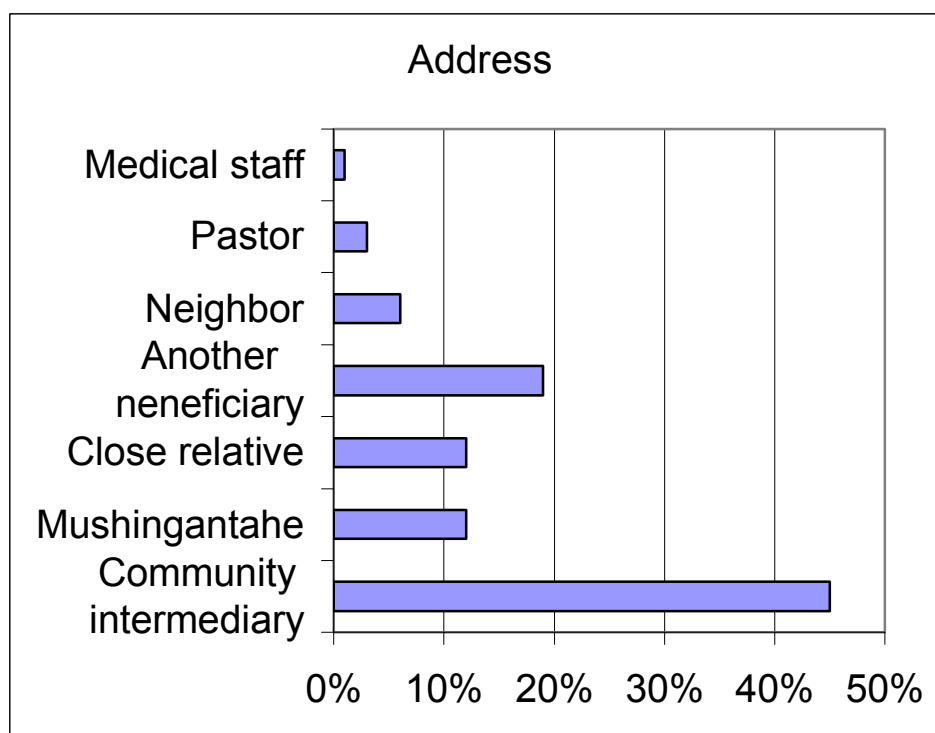
Also, the question relating to the system of replacement (see attached questionnaire), more than 60% of the victims have admitted not knowing the different services offered by VOT projects.

A suggestion would be for SFCG to analyze the possibility of centralizing the different components of support within a unique organization.

1st institution that was consulted before the psychological monitoring (N=55)



Health Center	55%
SFCG	2%
THARS	31%
MSF	5%
SWAA	5%
ABUBEF	2%

Who referred the patient to VOT?

Community volunteers	45%
Mushingantahe	12%
Close relative	12%
Another beneficiary	19%
Neighbor	6%
Pastor	3%
Medical staff	1%

- Does the system of gathering information function as planned? Do the project actors collect useful information for the project?

Field agents transmit regularly initial data collected from the victims, which are useful for the assistance of the victims, by using standard identification cards containing information like the identity of the victim, the place of detention, the description of the mode of torture utilized, the nature of the torture, identification of the aggressor, and the possible recourse.

However, those cards are not regularly registered in SFCG's central database. That could be done by establishing a system of personalized registered numbers that would follow the client through the whole framework of global support.

Also, THARS has recently established an evaluation scale of PTSD but did not establish a monitoring and evaluation system. Knowing that the evaluation of

psychotherapists is not always object to scientific consensus for complex reasons on which long comment can be formulated herein, we invite the team of VOT psychotherapists to elaborate themselves their own evaluation grid from the clinic reality they observe in the field. That grid could draw inspiration from the grids elaborated in Kirundi and French for the actual evaluation.

Also, the system of decentralization established by the main coordination has made it possible not only to realize the expected number of the VOT project beneficiaries, namely 800 in the beginning, but also go beyond it.

- Do the information collected by project managers serve to help them improve their decision-making?

Information collected and exploited by the project managers has made possible the achievement of activities like the production of documentaries, radio programs, and legal studies. The project managers became aware of the difficulty to find satisfactory solutions for efficient assistance to the victims of torture. Hence, the project coordinator at GR says her organization has recently initiated a new strategy consisting in field visits in the place of detention in order to increase the number of victims being legally assisted.

legal	medical	psycho	leg.+ psy.	leg. + med	med. + psy	med.+ psy. + leg.	Already treated	SFCG	SWA A	
30	58	308	15	13	15	1	1	319	1	905

Sources: SFCG data bank

Among the 905 cases identified, 44 identified victims have benefited from two types of assistance from two different partner organizations, and 3 others benefited from three different categories of assistance from three other actors.

This situation brings the total number from 905 cases to 855 victims.

- Do the created structures (such as the partnership structure) function properly?

As mentioned earlier, the system of decentralization made it possible to reach and assist quickly the direct beneficiaries of the VOT project. However, it will be necessary to reinforce a global common vision by increasing cross-cutting information sharing to the lower levels of the project.

- Does the staff possess the required capacities?

The scope of activities already realized and the objectivity of the recruitment structure in SFCG and its partners proves the existence of real competencies within the staff. However, the latter's capacities need to be reinforced both at an operational and organizational level and according to expressed needs.

- Does the project provide all the services needed by the victims of torture?

The VOT project assists the victims of torture through different services: Medical, psychological, legal and social.

However, the precarious economic situation of the victims calls for the initiation of income generating activities in order to allow a satisfactory socio-economic reintegration. It should be noted that food assistance is included in medical fees in the case of hospitalized victims.

The following chart sums up and illustrates the VOT project as it is perceived by the different participants to the focus groups:

Strengths of VOT project	Weaknesses of VOT project	Opportunities	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership of several associations; - A decentralized project from the top level to the grassroots level; - A project that operates in a country in steady transition; - A project that is supported by both the administration and the population; - A project that targets the improvement of the judicial proceedings; - A project that targets mass education and awareness raising. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A difficult context for the setting up of the project nationwide; - Resistance of the victims in the denunciation of their torturers; - Insufficient involvement of the representatives of the police and the judicial bodies; - Faulty implementation of the outline of duties; - Insufficient material and human resources; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuity of the VOT project's activities; -Awareness raising and training of doctors, nurses and representatives of the police and the judicial body; Reconciling the population by increasing the community volunteers; -Reinforcement of synergy between the different actors through meetings drawing together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persistent insecurity in some regions of the country; - Non-renewal of the project; -The upsurge of war; - Lack of cooperation from the judicial body and other indirect actors (hospitals etc.); -Lack of concern within the targeted populations vis-à-vis the project services;

	- Lack of cross-cutting information sharing.	actors and beneficiaries of the project; - Involvement of the population through local committees nationwide; - Seniority and field experience of the different actors.	- Burundian socio-cultural taboos.
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Victims of torture might bear tremendous physical and mental after-effects that handicap them in everyday life and even more in situations of danger. In addition, those handicapped persons cannot in most cases meet their own needs, let alone those of their families. A satisfactory assistance of victims of torture who bear mental or physical handicaps should in our point of view, consist of overall assistance- offer psychological assistance, medical assistance, functional rehabilitation, and material support.

Promotion of the project

The activities undertaken by the VOT project ensure to victims of torture legal, psychological, medical and social assistance.

Also, the same services of the VOT project seek the emergence of a culture of respect for human rights within the Burundian population.

That last point can be observed under two angles (upstream and downstream); considering the downstream as the grassroots populations and the upstream as the key actors in the political, legal and economic systems of the country.

At present, part of the population start to break the socio-cultural taboos by discussing with ease issues related to sexual violence.

Also, the population heads in great numbers towards the counseling centers even when they are quite remote.

Another attitude presently observed is denunciation by different actors in the project on crimes committed by civil servants or any other person of a certain amount of influence.

A behavior change is also observed upstream. Many times during interviews with the head of the police corps or the judicial body, the latter have noted that presently, police officers are more and more aware of the illegal nature of torture.

The evaluation team undertook a survey to appraise the level of promotion of the VOT project among its partners (**see chart below**). That survey targeted different people than those identified by the project and was led in the provinces of Bujumbura, Ngozi, and Ruyigi.

As far as SFCG is concerned, certain persons know the programs produced by Studio Ijambo even though not knowing the Organization.

It should be noted that THARS and GR, which play a key role within the VOT project, are not as well known as their partners.

Organization	Number of persons		
	Interviewed	Acknowledge the Organization	%
LIGUE ITEKA	300	233	77,6
SFCG	300	175	58,3
APRODH	300	115	38,3
GR	300	70	23,3
THARS	300	20	6,6

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To harmonize instruction level and degrees in psychology and psychopathology for the whole team of psychotherapists of VOT project.
2. Provide specialized training in trauma psychopathology, victims of torture psychopathology, which includes culturally and community based approach to hardship, illness, and healing.
3. Increase the frequency of supervision of the clinical work done by psychological counselors and assistants.
4. Re-assess the salary scale of the psychological counselors.
5. Propose job contracts that include medical insurance for the staff.
6. Increase the means of transportation and telephone communications for the psychological counselors and assistants as well as for the community volunteers.
7. Include/Add in the VOT project a validated system to measure/assess the evolution of the patients - victims of torture - who are assisted in the therapeutic framework.
8. To open two additional counseling centers and hire two psychological counselors in SFCG offices (Bujumbura and Ngozi) in order to address the victims' requests.
9. To find a Kirundi name for the VOT project, which would allow the removal of any ambiguity on the support it proposes.
10. Explore concepts from human sciences "trauma", "torture", "rape", "woman", "victim", "aggressor", "healing", "memory" etc. and study the mechanisms to translate from English and French to Kirundi in order to optimize the assistance frameworks, adapt them to the genuine needs of the population, ensure a mutual understanding between assistance givers and beneficiaries.
11. Set up a multidisciplinary team composed of linguists, ethnographers and psychologists, both Burundian and foreigners, to study the genuine needs of the population in psychosocial reconstruction.
12. Consider the ways of thinking and living strengths of the Burundian communities in the frameworks to assist and heal the victims of rape and torture.
13. In order to perpetuate the VOT assistance and treatment frameworks, it is desirable that the existing structures become associated, integrated even, in the assistance and health national network. It would be good to establish the counseling centers in hospitals and health centers.

14. Ensure respect of confidentiality of collected views as well as anonymity of the whole of involved partners until closure of legal decisions.
15. To reinforce the global and common synergy and vision within intermediary coordination through regular meetings between actors on the one hand and the latter and the beneficiaries at times on the other hand.
16. To incorporate a specific part to promote the VOT project's activities in Studio Ijambo. A " VOT" radio program could constitute an ideal channel for ideas, views and opinions of experts, former victims, students etc.
17. To create a cooperation framework between the project and the representatives of the police, the judicial body and the armed forces.
18. To create a monthly or bimonthly magazine on torture. It would illustrate views and opinions of students, experts and victims themselves.
19. To initiate income-generating activities in favor of the victims through victims' associations initiated by support groups.
20. To establish partnership with an institution specialized in the rehabilitation of physically handicapped persons.
21. To set up more centers for counseling through other local associations.
22. To use innovating tools in order to break cultural taboos: theatre, "mock tribunal"¹¹ etc.
23. Psychological assistance to torturers to ensure long-term prevention.
24. To train former victims in order to transform them into community volunteers for the future.
25. To use formal structures such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to incorporate the torture issue within its work. This would aim at increasing the impact of advocacy within the political class.

¹¹ A strategy that has been successfully used in Nigeria. It consists of setting up popular tribunals that deliberate and decide on cases of torture, home, and sexual violence. Their sentences are transmitted to the government and parliament in order to push them to take prevention and compensation measures in favor of the victims.