



**IFFAMPAC
AFRICA
NEWSLETTER**

IFFAMPAC Africa newsletter is the voice for the families of missing persons from armed conflicts in Africa.

Newly formed family associations' members and IFFAMPAC Africa representative Evans Lombe (third from left, front row) pose for the photo after IFFAMPAC capacity building training workshop on family association management.

On 21st-23rd January, 2009 IFFAMPAC Africa Regional Office launched Capacity Building Training for two newly formed family associations, Great Lakes Women Association in Zambia and Refugee Association for Better Life Club. The training targeted executive members of the family associations.

The training topics encompassed association management, leadership, managerial skills, project proposal writing, communication skills, usage of internet and financial accountability. The training was an eye-opener for the two associations' members, since they realized that their future is dependent on the family associations.

The training equipped the 21 executive committee members of the two family associations to handle key responsibilities in creating a good work environment. The training in association management has created a strong foundation upon which the family associations will be built to lobby for their social rights.

What then can the world learn from these efforts of IFFAMPAC? The world can now learn that the most neglected & disadvantaged vulnerable families in Africa can be the masters of their own destiny, once given the capacity to be responsible for themselves and make life better. Now we would like to invite the world to be part of these life-changing moments for the families of missing persons in Africa.



What change has IFFAMPAC training brought?

- ✓ The training has given the family associations capacity to manage their own affairs in the association and create new avenues on how to lobby for their social rights.
- ✓ The training entails that the associations can now determine which goals and course of action they should pursue.
- ✓ The training has helped to change the mindset of families of the missing, helping them realize that they can also learn and attain the knowledge that enables them to know their social rights.

IFFAMPAC FAMILY REUNIFICATION IN AFRICA A REALITY

IFFAMPAC's program of family identification of missing persons from armed conflicts has continued to be a success; this process has led to the possibility of family reunification in Africa. This is a clear indication that the effort of IFFAMPAC is the key to social justice for the families of missing persons in Africa and the rest of the world.

IFFAMPAC has achieved a great success in reuniting a family that went missing during armed conflicts in Congo, DRC-Africa.

The three missing children, Byamungu Buduli Rypa, Asifiwe Fatuma Rypa, and Sifa Eliza were reunited with their parents, Mr. Rypa Bantari & Mr. Sadiki.

The family separated during the war in Congo, the father to the children went to Zambia as a refugee later he was resettled in the U.S.A through a Refugee Social Resettlement Program. IFFAMPAC took upon itself to begin acting on the information which it got from both the children during family identification program which runs in Africa. IFFAMPAC in the process gathered further information through a refugee who was resettled in U.S.A and happened to know their father.



In January 2009 IFFAMPAC Headquarters office in U.S.A enhanced the search; later it established an address confirmation of the parents and a relative called Mr. Sadik who happened to live together. Upon contacting Mr. Sadik IFFAMPAC then gave the names of the children. Mr. Sadik choked up and started crying.

What then can we deduce from this achievement? It's a clear testimony that there are many families of missing persons in Africa, who are in need of knowing the truth about their missing family members. Therefore, we should realize that a just society is the one that respects the truth as a foundation for social justice. We need to serve African families and bring

them from abandonment and suffering. These three children had been suffering; sometimes they could not eat, and they walked long distances just to get connected to IFFAMPAC. We call that the spirit and desire of knowing the truth.



From left: Bymungu Buduli Rypa, Asifiwe Fatuma Rypa, Sifa Eliza & IFFAMPAC Representative Mr. E. Lombe

After informing the children, they could not believe it, because it seemed impossible looking at the long time it had taken. They immediately resolved to call their father and expressed their desire to reconnect as a family. After asking them what they felt they responded by smiling and the elder son Rypa stated that he had been redeemed.

The family reunification is the reason why IFFAMPAC exists. It is bringing hope to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable families in Africa. For 7 months, since the birth of IFFAMPAC's African branch, the lives of African families have been changing.

Our work as IFFAMPAC in Africa needs a lot of support and encouragement to continue overcoming obstacles and giving freedom to the families of missing persons. If IFFAMPAC's project proposal called *Identification of Families of Missing Persons in Armed Conflicts* was funded by donors, it would bring a lot of family reunifications across Africa and the world. This is a big problem in Africa, and at IFFAMPAC we have been receiving calls across Africa to conduct family Identification seminars of missing families in post-armed conflicts, but the challenge we face is lack of resources.

IFFAMPAC LAUNCHES FAMILY TRUTH QUESTIONNAIRE INTERVIEWS

In the year 2009 IFFAMPAC Africa Regional Office undertook Family Truth Questionnaire Interviews targeting families of missing persons from armed conflicts in Africa. The major aims of the interviews were to appraise the situations of these vulnerable families. The interviews endeavored to establish the following: how life was before armed conflicts, what could have changed after the armed conflicts, how the families are coping with the loss of their family members, what other family members do to get through daily life, how the surviving family members feel, what the situation is in terms of accessing social



needs and lastly how the truth would heal and bring change in their lives.

OUTCOME OF THE TRUTH INTERVIEWS

It was established that many families of the missing persons expressed their desire to know where their beloved family members are and what could have happened to them. The families tasked IFFAMPAC to begin assisting them in searching for their beloved ones. The families further stated that before the war they lived as a united families and had family goals that they hoped to achieve, such as attaining education and seeing the family members get married. They feel that armed conflicts have robbed them of this social right. As a result the family goals and aspirations are dead dreams.

Here are some of the stories from their own words:

“We used to live as a joyful family in Burundi; my family was liberal and integrative to other extended family members. We were taught to love other people despite differences in tribes, because that was a foundation of peace. After the war my family bond is broken; my situation is a disgrace and inhuman. I am now living as a refugee and working as a maid, a thing I never thought of in my life. Everyday I shed my tears as a source of healing. I will never get married because during armed conflicts I was massively raped by rebels; this gives me sadness, and it has robbed my dignity as a woman, and I have no feelings. All I need now is the truth about the fate of my family members, and then I can live on.”

“I lived in Rwanda in a family of 9; my father and mother exposed us to our local traditions. Suddenly genocide started, and we ran away in different ways. That was the end for my family; I have never heard from them. To remember my family I have decided to name my two children after my father and mother; this is the only way to feel near them. I feel abandoned and neglected by the situation. Imagine, I go to bed hungry with children. Each day that passes is a struggle to access for food and have a peace of mind. Please, IFFAMPAC, help me to find my missing family members; I need a new beginning and a chance to live a better life again because I was not born to be a refugee. Find me another country where I can resettle with my children.”

FINAL REGISTRATION OF THE SECOND FAMILY ASSOCIATION



On 21st January, 2009 the second family association, called “Refugees Association for Better Life Club” was finally registered & issued with a Certificate from Ministry of Home Affairs. This process has been a result of IFFAMPAC Africa’s regional office efforts in ensuring that families of missing persons from armed conflicts are given opportunity to realize their potential in solving problems which they face. This signifies that African families of missing persons can pursue collective goals through lobbying & acting in a manner that unifies their voice.

This process of forming family associations has seen women refugees mobilizing themselves and redefining their future by working together in a family

association called “Great Lakes Women Refugees in Zambia.” IFFAMPAC Africa’s office has witnessed collaboration between the two associations. Women can now stand on the platform and advocate for their social rights. This is what IFFAMPAC stands for—giving voice to the voiceless.

IFFAMPAC PARTICIPATION AT THE WORLD FAMILY SUMMIT +4



Second from right: IFFAMPAC president Jane Durgom-Powers during second symposium

In December 2008, IFFAMPAC was invited to attend and speak at the World Family Summit +4 held in Cairo, Egypt. The summit was organized by World Family Organization in conjunction with United Nations and the Egyptian Government. IFFAMPAC President Jane Durgom-Powers delivered a presentation on the theme, “The Families of Missing Persons’ Social Rights in Relation to the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals.” She clearly stated that if Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved, victims of armed conflicts (most of them women and children) should be taken care of, and social justice should be seen as a reality among the families of missing persons, both in Africa and the rest of the world.

She emphasized on the need for African governments to begin a process of reintegrating families of missing persons

back into society, with the goal of empowering them in terms of education and access to social needs. This would serve as a healing process from traumatic memories.

The President of IFFAMPAC also called upon the NGOs and other stakeholders to take keen interest in lobbying for the rights of families of missing persons. She shared with the participants from around the world the kind of work IFFAMPAC has been undertaking in Africa: identification of families of the missing persons from armed conflicts and formation of family associations. She took this opportunity to lobby the conference organizers to include issues of families of missing persons interventions & prevention measures in the conference resolution, so as to highlight their plight.

THE FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS AND IFFAMPAC

In armed conflicts between recognized military forces, the dead and wounded are usually carefully recorded. Sadly, this is not the case in less structured confrontations such as rebellions, religious hostilities, “ethnic cleansings,” internal security operations, and even some international peacekeeping missions.

Many people caught up in these events disappear and remain unaccounted for. Some have been taken prisoner or seized by the state or rebels; many are the accidental victims of crossfire or the explosive remnants of war such as landmines; others may be hiding in fear for their lives; and some are minors separated from



their parents when they fled the violence. Adults, children, citizens, and visitors can all be missing persons from armed conflicts. They are people in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

When men disappear in armed conflict, women often find themselves suddenly the head of the family. But they do not have the education, the emotional support, or the opportunity for employment they need to provide for their children or other dependants. Worse, laws in many countries prevent women from inheriting land and gaining access to bank accounts. In the case of a missing person, no death certificate is issued and, without it, the wife is unable to claim the use of family funds. As a result, thousands of children have been sold, abandoned, or given away and women left homeless.

WHO IS IFFAMPAC?

IFFAMPAC is the shortened name of our organization. The full name is The International Federation of Family Associations of Missing Persons from Armed Conflicts. We unite family associations worldwide providing families with a global support network. We act as a link to other NGOs and governmental agencies to address the social, economic, and legal problems that surviving family members face post-conflict. When requested by the families, we meet and negotiate with governmental officials to provide information on missing family members and we work on behalf of families to develop favorable national judicial reform to address the surviving family needs.

THE ROLE OF IFFAMPAC

IFFAMPAC is a registered international NGO (non-governmental organization) that holds special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. We have two principal roles:

An advocate

We are currently drafting a model international law to define the status of surviving families.

We are also developing best-practice guidelines for governments to address the issue of surviving family members who need assistance. This is an ongoing project. The law will also promote international standards, instruments and best practices to help identify and investigate missing persons.

IFFAMPAC will continue to be the voice of families of missing persons in Africa and other families of missing persons globally.

A link and archive as a tool for family reunification

IFFAMPAC creates a support network for family associations. We act as an information center and archive, and coordinate needed family services with other organizations and agencies. IFFAMPAC in Africa has begun a process of establishing statistical information on families of missing persons from armed conflicts and documenting all families of the missing. IFFAMPAC is being part of the reunification process of families of missing persons.

With this information our interactive website, when completed, will help families in Africa to:

- Exchange information regarding missing individuals; discuss successful and unsuccessful efforts to obtain information; strategies for obtaining information; explain problems surviving family members face.
- Link to resources that will help them to find information about missing persons and provide aid to their families.
- Form alliances with other family associations globally to inform and educate local and national authorities.
- Contact other organizations and agencies that provide specific services to meet the families' needs.

WHY SUPPORT, DONATE, AND FUND IFFAMPAC WORKS IN AFRICA?

In Africa, IFFAMPAC has begun to get an accurate accounting of the surviving families and their missing family members. Our approach gives us unique understanding of the overall problems that families face, and will enable IFFAMPAC to represent them effectively at forums such as the United Nations and international conferences with governments, agencies, and other NGOs. The planned projects for building schools, skills, and recreation centers for these families is a cornerstone for the fulfillment of fundamental human rights for a basic unit of society, the family.

IFFAMPAC welcomes donors to become part of the project implementation team. We do not work in isolation. As a team we can realize success. We welcome volunteers, and other organizations to affiliate with us. We also welcome in-kind donations.

For Donations & any other assistance please contact the following Persons:

1. Ms Jane Durgom-Powers at: jedp11@gmail.com
2. Ms Amy at: amy@iffampac.org
3. Mr. Evans Lombe at: evansmukopa@yahoo.com

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IFFAMPAC

Below is a brief list of the history and accomplishments of IFFAMPAC.

1970s: Our President first became involved with the issue of people who have disappeared and their families. She worked directly with families around the world, helping them to set up family associations. She began drafting national laws and reforms to assist surviving family members.

February 2003: The ICRC conference on The Missing revealed the need to unite and co-ordinate the work of the numerous associations of affected families in many parts of the world. Our President addressed the conference.

April 2003: IFFAMPAC was incorporated in the USA.

March 2006: IFFAMPAC was appointed to the United Nations Working Group on Persons who are unaccounted for in Connection with Events in Kosovo.

May 2006: The United Nations Economic and Social Council granted IFFAMPAC Special Consultative Status.

December 2007: IFFAMPAC was approved for association with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI).

March 2008: IFFAMPAC opened a Kosovo branch office in Pristine.

April 2008: IFFAMPAC opened an African branch office in Lusaka, Zambia.

If you would like more information on the issue of missing persons from armed conflicts or if you can help us continue our work by assisting us to obtain further funding, to make a donation, or to volunteer, please contact us at:

Your donations of funds or service will help us to act as an advocate, link and archive for family associations and enable IFFAMPAC to create a centralized, accessible, global database of information regarding the missing and their families.

If you would like more information on this issue if you can help us to obtain further funding, please

P.O. Box 6888
Rockford, IL 61125
The United States of
America

Phone: +1-815-877-1099
Fax: +1-815-637-4259
E-mail:



INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

P.O. Box 6888

Rockford, IL 61125 USA

Tel: (+1) 815 877 1099

Fax: (+1) 815-637-4259

info@iffampac.org www.iffampac.org

IFFAMPAC- AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE

P.o Box Fw 128, Lusaka-Zambia

Plot 6237, Thornpark, Bukavu Rd

Phone: +260 966 804871

evansmukopa@yahoo.com