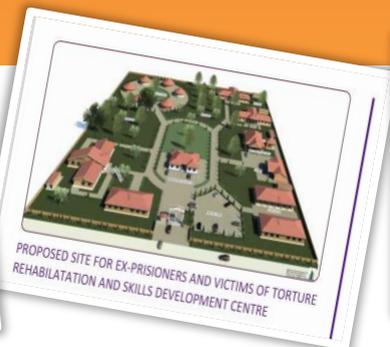


Centre for Hope and Life in and after Prison Initiative - Uganda

CHALAPI-UG – A VOICE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



Christmas Celebrations

Over the Christmas period CHALAPI's Rev James was only able to speak to prisoners at 4 prisons because of the lockdown restrictions. He had to stand outside the window of the inmate's dormitories and speak to them through it because they had to remain inside. They sang some Christmas Carols and James reported that there was much joy despite the difficulties of the situation. CHALAPI were able to provide some small gifts of basic items for the prisoners and for the prison officers, which also brought much joy.



Godfrey was unfortunately seriously ill in February with 2 severe asthma attacks within a week, meaning an expensive stay in hospital. He needed strong intravenous medication and then some rest and recuperation time at home because it made him very weak. The doctor said the attacks were probably caused by him breathing in dust in his facemask while he has been traveling around the area on CHALAPI business. The weather has been very hot and dry so it gets very dusty. His doctor has recommended a better facemask now.

This has been a frightening time for him and his young family but he is thankfully improving now.

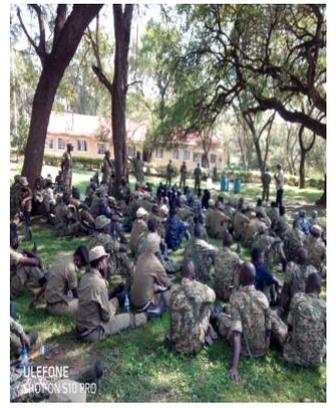


Moving in the mountains where many of the Royal Guards live

In January CHALAPI were asked by the Justice Centre in Kampala to help with the reintegration back into the community of over 100 Royal Guards who were arrested when the King of the Rwenzori Kingdom (where Kasese is the capital), was arrested 4 years ago. This was a frightening time for the local people, with much destruction of property including the King's palace, and 55 deaths. The Royal Guards have been held without charge for those 4 years but were released in early January. Some of them sadly returned home to find their wives had divorced them and remarried. CHALAPI have been able to help with post trauma management, reskilling of the Guards and with psychological support. The King remains on remand in prison in Jinja, to the east of Kampala.

Uganda Elections 2021

Uganda had a General Election in February, which was a tense time for CHALAPI. This election had been marred by sporadic violence in other areas, and the ruling government shut the internet down across the whole country for over a week, to avoid further trouble occurring. However, Godfrey says Kasese was peaceful, without any election violence for the first time, thanks to the hard work of CHALAPI and others. During this time CHALAPI visited over 102 police detention facilities in the district and were able to secure police bond for 11 candidate supporters who had been charged with petty assaults. CHALAPI were also asked by the local Police Commander to address the army, police and young people's groups on the triggers of election violence, and their individual contribution towards a peaceful election. Over 150 men in uniform attended and 70 young people and it was a valuable time.

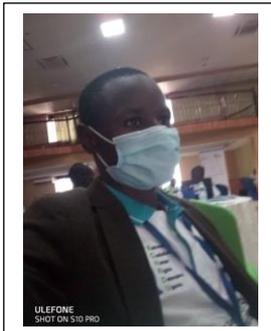


Nyabirongo Prison Update

In February CHALAPI were asked to help empty the septic tank at Nyabirongo Prison when it became full, causing illness amongst the Prisoners. The Officer in Charge telephoned Godfrey in a very distressed state, because the authorities were doing nothing about this horrible situation. Because this was a health issue, we asked Nurse Robert from Kagando Hospital nearby, who is responsible for the medical outreaches to Nyabirongo Prison, to use some of the money they have not spent on the outreach during the pandemic to get it emptied. A long-term solution to this problem would be to have eco toilets installed because they do not need to be emptied, but these are very expensive.

Coronavirus in Prison
Late in 2019 a 'sick bay' was established at Nyabirongo prison. This is a room separate from the main prison ward with a bed and equipment to care for sick prisoners in it. The idea has turned out to be quite an incredible foresight because any prisoners who display signs of Coronavirus can now be isolated in it until they can receive a negative test. There have been no recent cases of COVID in the Kasese area, thankfully. Medical outreaches to the Prison started again on 28th February. Nurse Robert was able to give care to a prisoner with epilepsy and one with bipolar disorder.

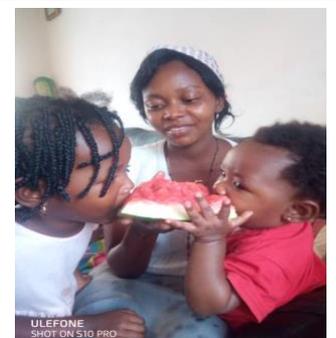
United Nations Human Rights Council Meeting, Kampala



On 26th Feb 2021 Godfrey was invited to Uganda's launch of its 3rd Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in Kampala. This is a state-level process, directed by the United Nations Human Rights Council, where human rights in each of the UN member states is reviewed and assessed on a four and half yearly cycle, to ensure promotion and protection of human rights in that country. It is a voluntary process that gives the state an opportunity to show the steps they have taken to improve their human rights record, and address challenges encountered in the course of protection and promotion of human rights.

He says 'The day ended well and I submitted a number of untold inhuman and degrading stories happening in prisons, including violations in observing prisoner's health rights and I highlighted the Nyabirongo septic tank issue (see above). My submissions left the entire house in shock. A recommendation was made to the National human rights commission to immediately work with the ministry of primary health care to visit prisons in the country, and report to the relevant authorities for action. We can watch the space and follow up.'

Godfrey was still suffering from the effects of his asthma attacks, but says 'I knew it was a rare platform where I could find an opportunity to speak out. The reason I decided to travel that long journey was sacrificing for those whose voices can't be heard even though my health is still not allowing me. I couldn't miss the opportunity of a meeting of high level national regional and international delegates.'



Godfrey's family enjoying watermelon at Christmas

Thank you for supporting this life changing and life transforming work!

Please check out our website at <http://www.chalapi.com> for more information