



# RESCUED FROM THE JAWS OF MOB JUSTICE

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Mob justice is not only criminal but also amounts to a violation of human rights. It infringes on the right to life and many resort to it because they have lost trust in a system that works.

This week's success story tells of a mother of five in Kamuli district. She approached our FIDA Uganda office desperately seeking temporary shelter for her family. Village residents and the Local Council Chairperson 1 (LC 1) had given the family five days to leave the village because her husband was a notorious thief. The night before she approached FIDA Uganda, her husband had been arrested in a neighbouring village with a stolen television and a woofer sound system. This raised suspicions and he was questioned by a few village residents as to why he was moving with them at night, and if the property belonged to him. He was adamant that the two items were his and he hadn't stolen them.

The television and woofer system were confiscated from him, and he was taken to the LC1. Here, he was given a chance to call the LC1 of his village to verify that the property was his, but this was in vain as there was no way to prove that he had stolen them and the LC1 had no authority to search his home or confirm that they were indeed his.

His wife told us that he had left his home at 18:00hrs to get medicine for his children two weeks ago but had not returned. She confirmed that he

had a reputation of stealing on many occasions and that was the main reason that the village residents were hostile towards her and her family. She also noted that there was a good chance that the television and woofer sound system was stolen.

The legal aid team at the FIDA Uganda Kamuli office partnered with Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) and conducted a locus mediation that was attended by hundreds of village residents who expressed their grievances, anger, and contempt towards her husband. The residents were also angry at the woman, because on several occasions, she provided an explanation for her husband. She also omitted part of her story and claimed that she did not know her husband was a notorious thief, even after her immediate family members had discouraged her from getting married to him due to his already known character.

She was dismissed on the basis that she was innocent as prescribed by the law since she did not partake in any theft, even if she was an accomplice. She was offered counselling as well as shelter for her and her five children because she had no place to stay. She had thought of selling part of her husband's land but was hesitant on thinking of how much she would get from the sale.

Fortunately, the village chairman had the land title deed and promised not to release it until a potential buyer approached him within the next three months. The chairman advised that the land be sold at UGX 2,500,000. It is with this sale, that we hope the woman and her family would be relocated to another village and reside there permanently.

Currently, the woman and her children are in a temporary and safe shelter away from potential harm and danger. The land that is to be sold is secured and a caveat has been placed on it so that the husband cannot make any transaction. The children are also being treated and there is the provision of food. In addition, village residents have agreed to trust the processes that FIDA Uganda uses. They are confident that we shall soon have a conclusion, and they are aware that they can approach

us at any time.

It is fortunate that the angry mob did not take the life of this man and that of his wife and children. There is still a lot of community sensitization to be held, but until then, we have found a solution that will work.

If you are experiencing cases similar to these, please reach out to us on **fidauganda.org** or on our toll free line: **0800 111 511**.



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