



Suspicion of defraud against Lucy Mashua –

FGM victim story exploited for monetary benefits?

Hamburg January 16th, 2010: The “Alliance for protection of girls from genital mutilation” announces the dismissal of Lucy Mashua from the position of the chairlady of the www.sponsoredgirl.com campaign because of suspicion of defraud and tried defalcation of money.

Abstract:

In October/November 2009, members of the Alliance had donated almost 1,000 USD to Lucy Mashua as she had claimed to urgently need money for buying the flight tickets for her two children to be taken from Kenya to the United States. First, the children were said to come in November/December, then, Mashua announced another date, January 2nd 2010.

When we asked Mashua to confirm that the money has been used for this purpose, she refused to do so – but in return started to spread menaces against members of the network, and tried to get written statements from the individual donors to step back from the requested confirmation of the money’s usage.

When the Alliance announced in an official letter to initiate legal steps against Mashua if she would not give proof of the designed usage of the money – or wire the money back, she promised to send the money back. We still wait for the money to come.

As furthermore we found out that an institution called “The Center For Life Enrichment” is raising funds for exactly the same purpose, “for the transportation of Lucy’s children to the United States” and had started its fundraising-activities for her already in 2007, we felt prompted to have a more precise look at the story Lucy is presenting in public – and we found several contradictions, lies and inconsistency, for instance regarding:

- her age,
- the number of her children,
- her story about her escape to the United States and
- the role of congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson

In short, there are so many obvious contradictions in Mashua’s Biography and story that it is quite impossible to get an idea about the truth and we have to assume that the donated money has never been meant to be used for buying flight-tickets.

The commitment and deep empathy of the “Alliance for protection of girls from genital mutilation” with girls and women who have undergone this violence does not include our absolution for defraud and betrayal against the background of FGM-experience.

The Alliance did therefore decide to not hush or to overlook its experience with Lucy Mashua, but to make it public in order to eventually prevent others from being taken the same way.



The whole story:

In September 2009, the Germany-based “Alliance for protection of girls from genital mutilation” – a network of eight children- and humanrights-organisations – invited Lucy Mashua to speak at a press-conference in Berlin. The reason of the conference was the launch of the www.sponsoredgirl.com campaign that raises awareness for the denial of protection for up to 400,000 sponsored girls (from Plan International, World Vision, Kindernothilfe and ChildFund) from the violence of female genital mutilation. Lucy Mashua had disposed herself to head this campaign as chairlady.

Previous research about Mashua’s activities had confirmed that she has been speaking out against FGM at different events, since her arrival in the United States in 2006. At the very first sight, there was no indication to be found that could have been leading to any doubt.

The strongest leap of faith for Mashua’s integrity was the fact that annually, she was invited to speak at “A World of Women for World Peace”-conference, hosted by Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson.¹

At this conference, she was regularly invited in her position as “President of Mashua’s voice for the voiceless International”. Crux of the matter:

Referring to the Alliance’s current investigations in January 2010, “Mashua’s voice for the voiceless International” does in fact not exist. There is no trace to be found about it as organisation, association or foundation. There is strong evidence, that it is purely invented by Mashua – and the president-position is simply fiction.

From the beginning of the co-operation with the Alliance, Mashua claimed to urgently need money for the flight-tickets of her two children who she had left behind in Kenya. She explained to have saved money but it would not be enough yet to pay the flight tickets for the two kids to travel to the United States. She would urgently need support because already in November/December 2009, they were expected to come to the United States.

The Alliance asked members and supporters of the network for help: 972 USD have been wired from different supporters to Mashua’s account. November 17th, she sent a message, stating that “...My kids can’t come until January 2nd...Apparently, the embassy didn’t get 45 days notice to prepare they travel to United States...”. Further investigations with the US-embassy in Nairobi will bring to light whether or not there has ever been such a travel-request.

In January 2nd 2010, she was asked by the Alliance whether her kids would have finally been arrived – and if she would kindly confirm that the donated money has fulfilled its purpose.

She was not able to deliver this confirmation but in return started to spread misleading rumours and menaces against members of the network, and tried to get written statements from the individual donors to step back from the requested confirmation of the money’s usage.

¹ Announcement at the Website of Eddie Bernice Johnson, April 18th 2009:

<http://ebjohnson.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=21&parentid=18§iontree=18.21&itemid=183>

Announcement at Dallas SouthBlog, April 10th 2008:

<http://dallasouthblog.com/2008/04/10/a-world-of-women-for-world-peace-hosted-this-weekend-by-congresswoman-eddie-bernice-johnson/>

List at www.conferencerecording.com, recording list from the 3rd International Peace Conference 2007: <http://www.conferencerecording.com/aaaListTapes.asp?CID=WPC27>



The Alliance therefore felt impelled to demand Lucy Mashua in an official letter to either deliver an authentic proof that the donations have been used for the designed purpose, or to wire the money back within a clearly defined timeframe if she wanted to avoid legal and public measures to be taken against her.

January 7th, two days after receiving the letter, Mashua stated that she has instructed her bank to wire the money back: *"I could not give you what you demanded confirmation of ticket as even the money you send me was not enough to buy a one way ticket for a child"*.

It has to be mentioned that at the same time as the Alliance's members wired money, Mashua had stated to have saved money. Also, she had received 1,500 USD for the same purpose from Linda May Kallenstein (Norway) who had invited Lucy Mashua to present her story at the Shortfilm-festival in Stavanger (Norway)². Mashua had to us clearly given the date of January 2nd as her children's arrival one.

Furthermore, an institution called "The Center for Life Enrichment" (Dallas) is officially raising funds "to provide for transportation of Lucy's children from the violence-torn Republic of Kenya to safety in the United States of America."³ The Center for Life Enrichment was found to have started its fundraising-activities for Lucy Mashua already in 2007⁴ and it is pretty much possible that since then, an unknown number of organisations and individuals have donated a so far unknown amount of money in the belief that it would be used to pay the mentioned flight tickets.

There's no transparence at all about these donations.

It is obvious that the Alliance's money has never been meant to be used for any flight-ticket, but Mashua is using the heart-rending story in order to receive money.

This suspicion is being substantiated even more by a number of contradictions and inconsistence within Mashua's whole story. Some examples:

Eddie Bernice Johnson's role:

Referring to Masua's statements, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson *"is a great friend"*⁵ and even *"has assigned people from her office to work with me 24/7..."*⁶

October 15th, Mashua stated that *"my congress-office"* is working on a diplomatic passport for her to become *"Global Ambassador for fighting FGM"*⁷

In January 7th, a telephone-conversation with Esperanza Worley, Deputy District Director at EBJ's office in Dallas brought to light that apart from Lucy Mashua's invitations to the peace conference, there was/is no co-operation or collaboration, nor are people in the office being assigned to work with her, nor was the office ever working on a diplomatic passport for her.

² Announcement at Linda May Kallenstein's Blog September 3rd 2009:

http://www.lindamaykallestein.com/Linda_May_Kallestein/Blog/Entries/2009/9/3_The_Cut_Online_and_Upcoming_Event.html

³ WebSite of „The Center For Life Enrichment“: <http://centerforlifeenrichment.org>

⁴ Letter from J Kendel Johnson to Sara Hickmann, published August 8th 2007:

<http://www.zenlala.com/index.php/zenlala/lucy/>

⁵ Interview with Lucy Mashua at Frontpage-magazine:

<http://frontpagemag.com/2009/11/25/a-survivor%E2%80%99s-battle-against-female-genital-mutilation-by-jamie-glazov/>

⁶ Mashua's coment at EBJ's Facebook-Fanpage-wall, January 4th:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Eddie-Bernice-Johnson/84096022067?ref=search&sid=608883976.212226533..1>

⁷ Personal correspondence, October 15th 2009



Lucy Mashua's children:

While in most articles – as well as in the story she told members of the Alliance – Mashua states to be mother of **two children**, there are other articles where she explains to be mother of **three children**:

*"It was still peaceful when Lucy left in 2006, and left her three children behind."*⁸

In an article from January 17th 2008, we have to read:

*"The children – ages 2, 5 and 8 – have been **in her mother's care** since Ms. Mashua left Kenya in 2006 to seek political asylum in the United States."*⁹

In another article, only two weeks later, from February 2nd 2008, the number of the children is reduced to two – and they have not been given to her mother's but her sister's care:

*"She gave birth to a daughter whom she named Hope, **but soon had to give her daughter and her other child to her sister to protect them from further violence!**"*¹⁰

Different stories about her escape to the United States:

In article at dallasblack.com from December 6th 2006, Mashua is telling a story in which a Bishop T.D. Jakes' delegation representative helped her to flee from Kenya:

*"Mashua felt strongly she had to leave the country. Her big break came this summer when one of her heroes, **Bishop T.D. Jakes of the Potter's House, came to the country with his delegation** to find and build water wells for several villages within the parch nation. Mashua never met "Poppy," as she calls him, but after sitting in Jakes' hotel lobby for seven hours ("seven for completeness", she said), she spoke with a delegation representative who connected her with international assistance organizations. **Her Visa was renewed** and she was flown to Dallas, where she is staying with supporters. "*

It needs to be mentioned that Bishop T.D. Jakes, referring to his timeline, did not travel to Kenya in 2006¹¹. Also, if her Visa was "renewed", she has obviously been in the States before, with another Visa. About this fact, she did never mention anything.

In April 2008, at the Richland Chronicle, Mashua is telling another, completely different story about her escaping from Kenya:

*"Mashua's second chance for escape came in August, 2006, while attempting to solicit money from businesses in Nairobi. Mashua recounted "I walked into an office and a lady was sitting there and said, "I have been waiting for you." That same lady paid Mashua's entire airfare to the States."*¹²

⁸ Article „Kenya violence separates North Texas family“, January 4th 2008:
http://www.txcn.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/localnews/tv/stories/wfaa080104_lj_kenya.d2d3c08.html

⁹ Article „In Dallas, Female Kenyan Activists fear for Homelend“, January 17th 2008:
<http://www.fgmnetwork.org/gonews.php?subaction=showfull&id=1200605016&archive>

¹⁰ Report of the Conference on Terror, Torture and Security, March 17th 2008:
<http://www.witherspoonsociety.org/2008/torture%20conference.htm>

¹¹ Bishop T.D. Jake's Timeline @ The Potterhouse:
<http://www.thepottershouse.org/v2/content/view/179/249/>

¹² Article „When will the mutilation Stop – African Activist visit Campus“, November 4th 2008:
<http://media.www.richlandchronicle.com/media/storage/paper1245/news/2008/04/11/News/When-Will.The.Mutilation.Stop-3320462.shtml>



One more contradiction – Her journey to Australia:

About her journey to Australia in 2001, she states the following 2006:

“Undaunted she accepted an invitation by other activists to travel to Australia on a goodwill tour, with a cast up to her knee.” (see footnote 15)

In 2008, the story sounds quite different – like if the journey was an escape but not a goodwill tour:

“In 2001, she escaped from Kenya and made her way to Perth, Australia. It only took three weeks before her family found her and told her that they had been threatened with death if she did not return to Kenya immediately.” (see footnote 12)

Mashua’s different Ages:

According to the different sources, Mashua’s actual age ranges from 29 to 31 years:

In an article from December 2006, she was announced to be 26 years old¹³ which would mean that in 2009, she would have been **29 years**. In November 2008, she was said to be 30 years old (see footnote 12) – and as in her official Biography her birthday is to be March 19th – she would have been **31 years** old in summer 2009. But she wrote in August 2009 to the Alliance: *“...I am 30 years old...”*. In her “official” Biography, she was born March 19th 1978 – and would therefore be **31 years** old.

Also, in her Biography, she states to have “graduated from the...International Central Management Institute”. The Alliance’s investigation did not lead to any result about the existence of such an institute.

Conclusion:

There are so many obvious contradictions in Mashua’s Biography and story that it is quite impossible to get an idea about the truth. Which parts of the story are true?

In fact, Mashua is generally linking her FGM-story and her “children left in Kenya (two or three)” to an insistant demand to wire money for the children’s flight tickets. If money has been wired, she then refuses to give proof that the money has been used for this purpose. Obviously in the last years, donors have been contended with her story that “one day the kids will arrive” – but it becomes apparent that this day will never come regardless how much money is being wired.

Also, no journalist has obviously done research about “Mashua Voice for the Voiceless International” which we found out to be a fictive structure, headed by Mashua as self-proclaimed president.

The commitment and deep empathy of the “Alliance for protection of girls from genital mutilation” with girls and women who have undergone this violence does not include our absolution for defraud and betrayal against the background of FGM-experience.

The Alliance did therefore decide to not hush or to overlook its experience with Lucy Mashua, but to make it public in order to eventually prevent others from being taken the same way.

Contact for further information, “Alliance for protection of girls from genital mutilation” (www.sponsoredgirl.com)

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¹³ Article „Kenyan Activist“ at dallasblack.com, December 6th 2006:
<http://www.dallasblack.com/entertainment/kenyanactivist>