

Kwacakworto's
**Talk to the South Sudan Delegation
of the International Committee of
the Red Cross (ICRC) in Juba**



Report by

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40 years back, I still think about ICRC as my former work place - Kwacakworo

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Sharing past memory about South Sudan



Staff listening to Kwacakworo while sharing his over 30 years' experience in Southern Sudan

“South Sudan is my second home, I learnt many peculiar things in this country for more than 30 years”– says Dr. Conradin Perner “Kwacakworo” while speaking to ICRC staff on 28 January in Juba Delegation.

Conradin received the nickname Kwacakworo from Anyuak community and it means the leopard. He joined the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1972 and worked as a delegate in India, Vietnam, and Central Asia before coming to Africa.

Staff at Juba delegation enjoyed the unique opportunity of Kwacakworo's

presence and were able to reflect back while listening to the firsthand information. Conradin is an ethnographer from Davos, Switzerland, who came for the first time to Sudan in the mid-70s and spent 3 years in the Anyuak community for research purposes. He published a book on this experience “Living on earth in the sky”.



Before and after he worked as an ICRC delegate, Conradin was again in Southern Sudan in the late eighties and early nineties as head of office in Leer and Yirol, and later in Lokichokio with frequent movements to some parts of Southern Sudan.

“Among ICRC “older” generation, Conradin is remembered as Kwacakworo, a field delegate whose heart and concern were always very close to the communities. He was very involved in helping the lost boys of Sudan. “It was a pleasure hearing his experience after almost 40 years of being away from Sudan and now in South Sudan”, says Sandra Moretti Carr - one of the colleagues who worked with Kwacakworo back in the 80s, she is the current South Sudan Cooperation Coordinator.

Conradin first worked in Sudan as a French lecturer at the University of Khartoum before being deployed by the ICRC in Southern Sudan by then. While in Khartoum, he visited a little-known tribe in South Sudan called the “Anyuak”. He was fascinated by these people and the way they lived. Upon return to the University of Khartoum, he couldn't stop thinking and researching about them and decided to quit his job as a French lecturer. He obtained a grant from the Swiss National Fund and headed to Sudan to study the oral literature of the Anyuak. Five years later he published an Anyuak-English Dictionary followed by his research with a summary of 4000 pages on the life, culture, and history of the tribe in an

eight-volume monograph.

He also published his latest book about his life with the Anyuak, called *"Why Did You Come If You Leave Again?"* This is what the late King Agada of the Anyuak asked him as Conradin was preparing to leave for his native country of Switzerland after living with the Anyuak for five years. The biography records Conradin's life and adventures among the Anyuak who named him Kwacakworo (the leopard). It is a poetic and a spiritual journey of struggle, understanding, and appreciation of an African people and their culture.

Kwacakworo remains his popular name – It draws to his legacy with the Anyuak Community in South Sudan. He worked in South Sudan with several organizations including UNICEF, UNESCO and was the senior peace advisor for the Swiss government in South Sudan. He lived with the South Sudanese through their struggle for peace, justice and dignity, and came to admire and write numerous articles and books about them.

Kwacakworo's great contribution impacted on many lives of the South Sudanese including the "Lost Boys" during the civil war. He was given a Yellow Star Medal by President Salva Kiir on July 2011. The president expressed his appreciation by giving the medal as a symbol of hope and prosperity and in his honor, the medal color is retained on the flag of the new Republic of South Sudan.

The staff heard the inspiring story of Kwacakworo with great enthusiasm for almost one hour including questions and answers.

Juba delegation

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