

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- **CALM SECURITY SITUATION PREVAILS IN NORTHERN UGANDA; CRIME REMAINS PRIMARY SECURITY THREAT**
- **GULU, KITGUM DISTRICTS ASSESS NUMBER AND SITUATION OF EXTREMELY VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS (EVIS) IN CAMPS**
- **MENINGITIS OUTBREAK SPREADS TO 5 DISTRICTS: 336 CASES, WITH 43 DEATHS, REPORTED**

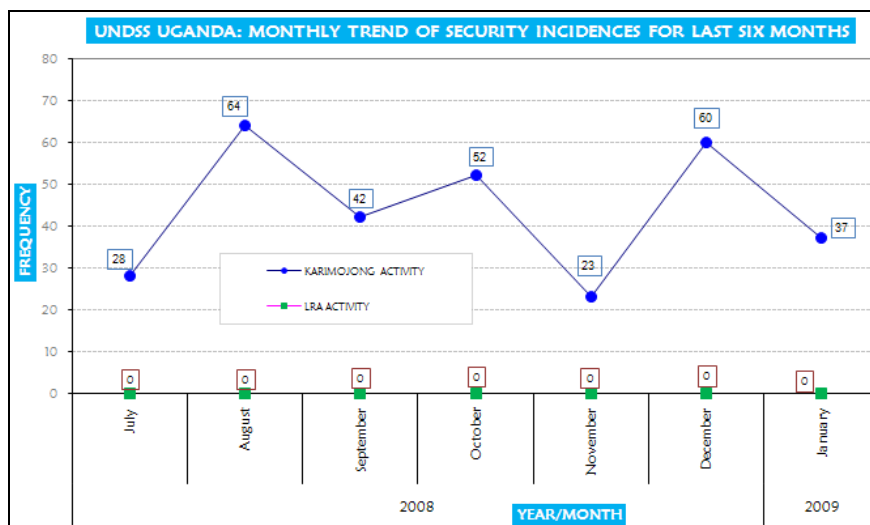
II. SECURITY AND ACCESS

SECURITY

The security situation in northern Uganda remained calm during the reporting period, although there has been increased anxiety reported among the civilian population in the wake of the joint Uganda-Congolese-Southern Sudanese operations against the Lord's Resistance Army launched in December 2008. No LRA activity or presence has been reported in northern Uganda.

Crime remains the primary security concern in the region. In particular, a rise in the number of gun-related criminal activities has been reported, with two civilians in Gulu and a local businessman in Amuru shot and killed by suspected robbers during the month. In Pader, a commercial truck was ambushed near Corner Kilak, resulting in the looting of an unspecified amount of merchandise. To address the problem, district authorities in Gulu and Amuru are considering proposed measures to recover illegal arms held by members of the civilian population.

Aggressive Karimojong activities persisted, albeit at a reduced rate from the previous month. Some 12 incidents, causing 20 deaths, reportedly took place, as well as 17 cattle raids (the majority in Matheniko County, Moroto District). Disarmament operations continued in the region, including in Moroto and Kaabong Districts. At times, such operations meet with resistance from illegally armed residents of the region, resulting in clashes. However, the disarmament operations have had no direct impact on humanitarian operations in the area.



Source: UNDSS

Access

During the reporting period, bush fires in Paimol, Lapono and Pajule sub-counties of Pader District caused the deaths of nine people, destroyed eight huts and left 51 individuals homeless. Ironically, the bush fires are usually set with the intention to clear areas around settlements and roads to make them more secure and accessible.

III. POPULATION MOVEMENT

While the bush fires have not had any reported impact on population movement in northern Uganda, their frequent outbreak during the current dry season remains a source of concern as they often destroy thatching grass needed by IDPs moving out of the camps.

With reference to the below table, please note that, the figures are as of 30 November 2008 and that due to the return of individuals displaced to locations other than IDP camps, i.e. to urban centres and surrounding districts, the total number of individuals in transit and villages of origin exceeds the number that have left the camps. Also, the total number of former IDPs returned to villages of origin since January 2006 through the LRA-affected north is 1,041,000, including all 466,000 former IDPs in the Lango sub-region, where the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) for Lira officially ruled the displacement over in April 2008.

Region	District	Original camp population (end 2005)	Estimated camp population	% of original camp population	Population in transit sites	% of original camp population	Population in villages of origin	% of original camp population
Acholi	Amuru	204,000	104,000	51%	79,000	39%	21,000	10%
	Gulu	257,000	153,000	60%	70,000	27%	141,000	55%
	Kitgum	310,000	102,000	33%	62,000	20%	154,000	50%
	Pader	339,000	78,000	23%	118,000	35%	143,000	42%
	Acholi Total	1,110,000	437,000	39%	329,000	30%	459,000	41%
Teso	Amuria	72,000	11,000	15%	3,000	4%	58,000	81%
	Katakwi	71,000	7,000	10%	-	-	58,000	82%
	Teso Total	143,000	18,000	13%	3,000	2%	116,000	81%
Grand Total		1,253,000	455,000	26%	332,000	16%	575,000	61%

Source: UNHCR November 2008

In southern Karamoja, a large settlement has been established in Moroto District and currently accommodates 3,432 households, many of whose members continue to move back and forth according to food availability. The Potu Dadang village is populated by 37 communities of Pian and Bokora, and there are plans to develop 23 separate clusters within the village in the future.

IV. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

EDUCATION

Outside of Gulu municipality, results from last year's Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) in the district, as in Amuru, were very poor: of the more than 4,000 candidates in both districts, only four pupils - three in Gulu and one in Amuru - scored in the first grade. In response, stakeholder meetings have been convened. Major challenges to the sector remain weak pre-primary school foundations, inadequate monitoring and supervision of schools, teacher and pupil absenteeism, poor infrastructure in the schools and minimal parental or community interest in school affairs.

In Gulu, seven primary and four secondary schools are yet to return to their sites of origin, although six of the primary schools have structures and meet minimum standards for return. In Amuru, 53 primary schools were assisted to return in 2008, but 16 are still displaced due to infrastructure challenges in their original locations. A total of 29 schools in Kitgum District plan to return in the course of this academic year, while the District Education Office reports that 50 returned schools need emergency infrastructure. Meanwhile, the Education Office has identified areas in which it requires support from partners to meet its 2009 priorities, including support for the construction of classroom structures for schools that lack any infrastructure at all; support in the construction of teachers' houses (1,810 are needed in total); support to school monitoring and inspection, particularly through provision of fuel for inspectors; and scaling up of support to secondary schools, most of which lack laboratories and libraries.

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS

General Food Distribution (GFD) in seventeen sub-counties across the Acholi region was phased out starting in January 2009, accounting for 22% of previous beneficiaries, in accordance with the GFD Phase-Off Plan.

District	Sub-Counties	Number Beneficiaries Phasing-Off GFD	As % of Previous District GFD Caseload
Amuru	Amuru, Koch Goma, Purongo	58,577	21%
Gulu	Bobo, Bungatira, Koro, Ongako	27,295	29%
Kitgum	Amida, Layamo, Kitgum Matidi, Lokung	59,378	20%
Pader	Acholibur, Laguti, Kilak, Lapul, Pajule, Puranga	65,802	23%
Total		211,052	22%

In Karamoja, the registration and verification of food aid beneficiaries is ongoing with the participation of the district local governments of Kotido, Kabong, Abim, Moroto and Nakapiripirit, as well as United Nations and NGO partners active in the food security sector. The purpose of the exercise is to update food aid beneficiary lists in order to improve the targeting of general food distributions (GFD) ahead of the launch of the World Food Programme (WFP)'s US\$ 64 million Emergency Operation (EMOP). The EMOP targets 970,000 out of the region's total estimated population of 1.1 million people.

New cases of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) continue to be registered in Pader District, particularly in Agago County where the quarantine on animals remains in force. The district has introduced the additional measure of banning consumption of all meat from ruminants, but the effectiveness of the measure has been hampered by the rise of a black market for meat. Containment of the disease in Abim District, where the outbreak was first reported three months ago, continues to be challenged by a vaccine shortage: only half of the required drugs have been received.

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND HIV/AIDS

An upsurge has been reported in the number of new cases of Hepatitis E in Kitgum District; a total of 53 new cases were registered in the fourth week of 2009, reflecting an 89% increase compared to 28 new cases recorded in the preceding week. The upsurge has been blamed on relaxed control interventions in the field, weak oversight by sub-county task forces and poor surveillance and case management at the health unit level, particularly as a result of the

long holiday period beginning in December 2008. As of the end of the reporting period, a cumulative 9,395 cases and 144 deaths had been recorded since the outbreak began in November 2007, resulting in a case fatality rate (CFR) of 1.5%. In Pader, 105 cumulative cases and seven deaths have been recorded since the outbreak was first reported in the district in May 2008, while no new cases of the disease have been registered in Gulu and Amuru for the past three months, although both districts remain on alert.

Following confirmation of the outbreak of Wild Polio Virus in neighbouring Sudan, the Ministry of Health launched a two-day mass polio campaign in Kitgum, Pader and other districts on the border between the two countries, during which it carried out supplemental immunisations.

A programme to conduct mass chemotherapy for onchocerciasis in the affected areas of Amida parish in Kitgum District is scheduled to begin in March under the Neglected Tropical Diseases programme at the Ministry of Health.

In Gulu and Amuru, a 30% increase in the malaria incidence rate has been registered, attributable in part to increased case reporting resulting from improved accessibility following the opening of new health facilities. However, inadequate stocks of the first-line Artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT) drugs have prompted both districts to revert to the old combination of chloroquine and sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine, the efficacy of which remains in question. Increased cases of dysentery have also been reported in Gulu Municipality and Nwoya County (Gulu District) due largely to breakages in urban water supply, as well as the persistent scarcity of safe water as a result of dried up sources in the villages.

In Karamoja, an outreach team from the Bokora Health sub-district (Moroto District) conducted a two-day residential programme at Apeitolim resettlement site where it treated 337 patients, including 32 pregnant women. The team also provided treatment to returnees from Lomoratoit resettlement site.

Nearly 160 members of village health teams (VHTs) in Kaabong District received training on early detection and referral of severely malnourished children to therapeutic feeding centres (TFCs) in January, and nine out-patient treatment programmes (OTPs) are operational in the district. However, additional support is required in order to establish nutritional sentinel site surveillance throughout the districts of northern Karamoja. Currently, monitoring is only taking place at the regional level.

PROTECTION

Discussions are ongoing in Gulu and Amuru over a new strategy to facilitate demolition of uninhabited/unused structures in camps, following the suspension of a scheme in which members of the Camp Phase-out Committees (CPCs) were paid allowances for the activities. The apparent reluctance of the community to undertake camp clean up exercises, lack of ownership, as well as questions over the sustainability of the scheme have been cited as reasons for the suspension. Camp phase-out activities continued in Gulu during the month, involving the demolition of 8,630 huts, 866 pit latrines, 400 rubbish pits, and 4,362 bath shelters.

As the return process progresses and camp phase-out activities continue, increasing attention is turning to the extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIS) remaining in camps. In Gulu, an assessment by the District Community Services department indicated a total of 3,000 EVIs requiring assistance to facilitate their return to villages of origin. In Kitgum, the first draft of a proposed database suggests that at least 2,645 EVIs remain in the camps, with the majority (99.8%) having expressed an intention to return.

Rising incidents of landowners resorting to extreme measures to evict IDPs from their land have also been reported in northern Uganda. In Kitgum District, for example, a landowner removed the roofs from four huts belonging to commuting residents of Mucwini IDP camp in a bid to force them off the land he had recently bought. In Koro camp (Gulu District), a landowner reportedly set fire to 13 IDPs' huts. Similarly, forced evictions have been reported in Ongako and Olwal camps in Amuru District. The problem is compounded by a lack of clarity from the Government on the option to integrate in the former camp as one of the durable solutions to displacement.

Human Rights and Rule of Law: In Karamoja, an inspection of the detention facility at the UPDF's 405 brigade headquarters revealed that 86 suspects were forced to share three unipots (round, single-roomed metallic housing units) improvised as detention cells, while they also lacked a regular supply of drinking water. The Army subsequently released 74 of the suspects citing congestion problems.

Child Protection: During the reporting period, 39 street children in Gulu were resettled with their families and provided with educational support through a district programme supported and implemented by a sub-cluster partner.

Gender Based Violence: In northern and northeastern Uganda, the sub-cluster has begun implementing a two-year joint prevention and response project, bringing together 11 partners from civil society, the Government and the United Nations. The project aims to improve the quality of, and access to, services by GBV survivors in seven districts.

Mine Action: The critical need for Mine Risk Education (MRE) interventions targeted at children was further demonstrated during the month, following a blast at Lalworo-dong return site in Parabongo sub-county that killed three children who were playing with an unexploded ordinance (UXO). Pader District authorities together with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) are urging agencies engaged in MRE to design programmes targeting children as well, given that most of the recent victims of UXOs have been children.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Continuing efforts to improve access to safe water in Gulu involved the sinking of 20 boreholes in 20 primary schools during the reporting period. A total of 15 latrine stances were also constructed in two schools, but the gap in latrine coverage remains critical.

V. SPECIAL FOCUS ISSUES

MENINGITIS OUTBREAK

An outbreak of meningitis has been confirmed in the West Nile sub-region and surrounding districts. The outbreak, first detected in Arua District at the end of 2008, has spread, with cases reported in Adjumani, Moyo, Masindi and Hoima Districts. As of 4 February 2009, a cumulative 336 cases and 43 deaths had been recorded, a case fatality rate of 13 per cent. Arua has reported the largest number of cases, with over 60% of all cases, but the disease has been most devastating in Hoima and Masindi, which together account for nearly half of all fatalities. As of the time of reporting, mass vaccinations had been completed in the affected sub-counties in Arua, Hoima and Masindi, but not in Moyo and Adjumani due to inadequate drug supply. Neighbouring districts in northern Uganda, particularly Gulu and Amuru, are on alert, with ongoing active surveillance and sensitisation of the community. Northern Uganda is part of the "Meningitis Belt", an area vulnerable to outbreaks of the disease that stretches from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east and is home to an estimated 300 million people.

VI. FUNDING

To date, there have been no commitments to the US\$ 225 million Consolidated Appeal for Uganda in 2009. Funding of the US\$ 374 million appeal for 2008 stands at US\$ 267 million, or 72% of the total funds required.

VII. THE MONTH AHEAD

MONTHLY CLUSTER MEETING SCHEDULE

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS cluster 14.30 at WHO	GBV sub-cluster 10.00 at UNFPA	Child Protection sub-cluster 10.30 at UNICEF	Education cluster* 9.00 at UNICEF	
		Food Security and Agricultural Livelihoods 14.30 at FAO		Water, Sanitation and Hygiene cluster 14.00 at UNICEF	
Week 2	Heads of Cluster 11.15 at OCHA		IASC in Uganda 10.00 at OCHA		
Week 3	Protection Cluster 14.30 at UNHCR				
Week 4			Contact Group** 14.30 at OCHA		

* Education Cluster will meet on a bi-monthly basis in 2009: in January, March, May, July, September and November

** Contact Group will meet on a monthly basis in 2009, on the last Wednesday of each month.

VIII. CONTACTS

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