



UGANDA HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT 1 – 31 JULY 2007

JULY HIGHLIGHTS

- **UXO and ERW explosions** in Lira and Gulu highlight danger posed by UXO in conflict-affected areas; five killed and one injured in two separate incidents.
- **Marburg Fever outbreak:** one fatal confirmed case and one suspected case since recovered.

I. GENERAL HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

SECURITY

In **northern Uganda**, the situation remained generally calm with no aggressive Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) incidents reported during the month. However, a number of incidents of criminal activities, including rape and robbery, have been reported. While these incidents have not interrupted humanitarian activities, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) has cautioned all humanitarian workers, especially women, to take personal security seriously.

The continuing threat posed by unexploded ordnance (UXO) in conflict-affected areas was underscored during the reporting period by two separate incidents. Five people were killed at Ayami IDP camp in **Lira** on 22 July, when an UXO exploded while the deceased were crushing scrap metal into smaller pieces for transportation. The UXO is believed to have been accidentally loaded onto the truck at Awere, in Pader district. In a separate incident in **Gulu**, an Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) exploded in a garden near Unyama camp, seriously injuring the victim's legs.

In **Katakwi** and **Amuria**, demobilization exercises involving Arrow Militia were concluded on 1 July, while the withdrawal of the militia from locations in sub-counties bordering Karamoja, including Magoro, Ngarian, Usuk, and Ongongoja in Katakwi, and Kapelebyong, Obalanga and Acowa in Amuria, led to fresh tension in those areas. Elements of the Anti Stock Theft Unit (ASTU) are being re-organized to fill the gaps created by the demobilization of Arrow Militia. 1,300 ASTU were cleared for deployment on 6 July, bringing the total ASTU strength to 4,410 trained individuals deployed across 11 districts. The target is to recruit and train 7,000 ASTU personnel.

The **Karamoja** region reported several security incidents including aggressive Karimojong activities, cattle raids, road ambushes and confrontation with the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) during the ongoing forceful disarmament. In total, UNDSS recorded 36 aggressive Karimojong activities in July, as well as seven road ambushes perpetrated by illegally armed Karimojong. The latter type of incident is of particular concern as due to their unpredictability and lack of established pattern.

ACCESS

Most IDP camps and settlement sites remain accessible without restrictions. Increased access to farmland has been reported, as IDPs prepare for second season planting. However, many access roads are reportedly impassable due to heavy rainfall.

In Katakwi and Amuria, local government and humanitarian agencies have had only limited access to nearly 44,000 people living in 41 camps due to factors including erosion of roads, bridges and culverts by heavy rainfall. Additionally, access to communities in very remote locations and hard-to-reach areas has been made increasingly difficult by high bush and thinly-spread security presence. Access to fields also remains limited for most communities in areas bordering Karamoja. However, all camps and settlement sites are accessible without military escorts.

POPULATION MOVEMENT

Movement out of camps continued in Acholi during the reporting period. While in Kitgum, Gulu and Amuru districts, the majority of the population remains in the IDP camps, in Pader district, the majority of the displaced population is now residing in return sites. In Lango, the IDPs remaining in 11 camps constitute only 5 per cent of the original displaced population.

The trend of commuting between IDP camps and settlement sites continues in northern Uganda, attributed to the lack of basic services in return areas. In Gulu, reduced movement to return sites has also been attributed to the lack of long grass for thatching roofs. In Kitgum, UXO contamination and the presence of human remains, as well as the lack of proper access roads are preventing internally displaced persons (IDPs) from returning to their homes. In Amuria, the return process was reportedly slow due to the security threat from Karimojong warriors.

MARBURG OUTBREAK

The Ugandan Ministry of Health publicly confirmed an outbreak of Marburg Fever on 1 August, which was suspected to have started in Kitaka gold mine, Kamwenge district. As of 9 August, the Health Minister declared that the chain of transmission had been broken, noting that 25 days had passed since the last contact with a Marburg case. Health authorities will continue active surveillance, case management, infection control and social mobilization activities for an additional 21 days.

In total, one case (deceased) was confirmed, with a second (recovered) case suspected. The national task force established by the Ministry of Health had traced and was monitoring some 228 contacts across 4 districts of Uganda by 9 August. Blood samples had been taken from 25 close contacts and sent to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta for testing. The CDC now has a team on the ground in Kamwenge district, where the Kitaka mine identified as the source of the epidemic is located, to conduct an investigation into the source of Marburg Virus, looking specifically to the mine's bat population as the possible source. Another possible source is a Kolbus monkey, which was reportedly caught and skinned by the index case. The monkey skin in question was located in a Kampala and has been sent to Atlanta for testing.

II. HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

GULU AND AMURU

Health Nutrition and HIV/AIDS: Low staffing levels and absenteeism remain critical challenges in both districts. The central government has embarked on a recruitment drive intended to raise the staffing level from 26 per cent in Gulu and 34 per cent in Amuru, to 55 per cent in both districts. There is also a need to curb absenteeism through regular monitoring and supervision.

The recent increase in rainfall has led to an increase in malaria cases. Village Health Teams (VHTs) have been prompt in their response and treatment of children with malaria, although they face a shortage of drugs, particularly Coartem.

Amuru district reported a shortage of Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), attributing it to delays in the release of drugs by the National Medical Stores.

At a meeting organised by WHO and the district health office, it was observed that the burden of mental illness is likely to increase with the return and resettlement process. Not all cases were expected to require psychiatric treatment, but there would be need for community-based interventions. It was recommended that a mental health working group be established.

Food Security: The distribution of poor quality seeds and farming tools during the first planting season has led the food security cluster to recommend seeds multiplication. Seeds fairs and voucher systems will also be promoted to ensure better yielding seeds.

Protection: The district reported a reduction in the number of Special Police Constables (SPCs) deployed since most existing SPCs were recruited into the regular police force and taken for a nine-month training course. The return sites are most affected by the gap created as a result of this development. The District Police Commander has said there are plans to recruit substitute SPCs.

Education: In the process of returning from displacement camps to their original sites, schools face challenges of transportation, inadequate teacher accommodation and inadequate infrastructure (e.g. classrooms).

KITGUM

Health Nutrition and HIV/AIDS: An outbreak of rabies was reported in Mucwini and Madi Opei sub-counties, prompting the district to undertake a vaccination drive in both sub-counties. Meanwhile in Potika IDP camp, a suspected case of measles was reported and samples were taken to Kampala for analysis. The results are yet to be released.

Food Security: The food security cluster is in the process of developing a mechanism for monitoring seeds distributed to farmers, with the objective of forecasting first season production for 2007 and planning for the second season.

Protection: An inter-agency population monitoring assessment observed that the presence of landmines and UXO is preventing IDPs from returning to their homes areas. The District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) has recommended that a de-mining team be constituted and stationed in the district. At present, there is a de-mining team based in Gulu district.

PADER

Health Nutrition and HIV/AIDS: One suspected case of cholera was reported and confirmed by a rapid test. As further tests are being conducted, the patient remains isolated in a cholera treatment centre. Meanwhile, the district has also reported the presence of flies that cause river blindness (Onchocerciasis) and Tsetse flies. There is need for intervention to curb the possible effects of both types of insect.

Protection: Reported cases of domestic violence continue to increase in the district. Most of these incidents occur following food distributions when women try to stop their husbands from selling household food or when couples struggle over who should benefit from the food ration.

Education: It has been noted that many children of school-going age are playing truant. Parents are being blamed for this trend since they send the children to gardens during school hours. Other reasons for truancy include lack of sanitary kits for girl-children, lack of parental guidance for children who have separated from their parents and distribution of food on school premises which diverts children's attention from studies. WFP has discussed with the district Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) the possibility of identifying other food distribution points.

LIRA AND OYAM

Health Nutrition and HIV/AIDS: There is a low coverage of laboratory services in Lira district – only the four Health Centre IVs, one Health Centre III and four NGO Health Centres have laboratories.

District immunizations for BCG (tuberculosis) achieved 123 per cent of the target population. Vaccinations of polio 3 and measles and Vitamin A supplements are expected to meet their annual targets.

Both districts have experienced an upsurge in malaria incidence owing to the rainy season, overgrown vegetation and stagnant water puddles, all of which support mosquito breeding. The malaria committee has in response stepped up the distribution of Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Nets (LLITNs).

Protection: Land disputes are becoming more rampant in return areas, accounting for 86 (53 per cent) of 161 protection cases reported in July. These are expected to increase as the return process continues. The capacity of Local Council structures needs to be strengthened in order to handle land disputes effectively. Domestic violence, child abuse, and UXO are the other protection issues reported. Defilement was also reported to be on the rise, as parents leave their children in IDP camps to go construct homes in their villages of origin.

Education: All formerly displaced schools have returned to their original sites. Despite the return of schools and the fact that 65 per cent of villagers rate access to education better now than in the camps, large numbers of children are not accessing education due to factors including household chores and gardening due to the heavy rains. Lack of adequate staffing and dilapidated structures are other constraints, while in some cases, pupils' enrolment has been reportedly influenced by feeding programs.

A number of headmasters reported that pupils tend to leave schools which do not benefit from feeding programs and flock to those that do.

KATAKWI AND AMURIA

Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS: Both districts reported a critical shortage of Triomune, a critical drug of those living with HIV/AIDS. This has affected over 200 people living with HIV/AIDS on antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) in both districts. The shortage has been attributed to delays in the release of drugs from the National Medical Stores.

Protection: Groups of women and children were reported to be coming into Katakwi and Amuria from Karamoja region. Exhaustion from travelling long distances without food and water make these particularly vulnerable people. Upon arrival, some of the groups have encountered rowdy and hostile crowds and have required police protection. Reception systems and procedures should be established to facilitate monitoring of both migrant and the host communities.

Food security: Waterlogging due to heavy rains continue to affect over 300 fields in parts of Ngariam, Kapelebyong and Magoro sub-counties, causing rot of cassava, groundnuts, millet and sorghum. An inter-agency assessment is needed to evaluate the degree of damage and its possible implications on household food security, particularly for vulnerable communities.

WASH: One person had died due to a jigger infestation in Olupe camp, Ngariam sub-county, with a continued threat of further infestation due to poor hygiene in the camp. Sharing dwelling places with animals and the current heavy rains are the major causes of deteriorating hygiene and sanitary conditions in the camp.

III. CLUSTER HIGHLIGHTS

Water sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The provision of water in IDP camps is gradually approaching the international standard of 15 litres/person/day (l/p/d), with districts recording average levels of 14.6 l/p/d in Kitgum, 12.1 l/p/d in Gulu, 11 l/p/d in Amuru, and 10 l/p/d in Lira.

However, across the Acholi and Lango sub-regions, access to water and sanitation in areas of return remains a major concern.

As the return process continues in all districts, the Cluster is beginning to see the closure of programmes by NGOs involved primarily in the emergency phase; Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) has scaled down tremendously in Lira and Kitgum, as have the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Lira and COOPI in Kitgum.

Education

Instructional materials to facilitate implementation of the “Thematic Curriculum” in Uganda have been distributed to all 1931 primary schools in 18 districts across the Acholi, Lango and Karamoja sub-regions.

In **Karamoja**, primary school enrolment continues to increase in Kotido District. The latest statistics show primary school population of 12,587 (5,989 girls) up from 11,727 children (5,583 girls) reported in June. There has been a 64 per cent increase in primary school enrolment since the launch of the Go Back to School (GBS) campaign.

Meanwhile, the involvement of the military in mobilizing school enrolment is being closely monitored by the Karamoja sub-regional team, and is expected to be a major discussion point in the proposed Sub-Regional Education Forum to be hosted by Abim district.

In **Lango** sub-region, monitoring reports indicate that at least 30 per cent of out-of-school children in the sub-region are now enrolled back to school as a result of the GBS campaign.

Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS

The changing humanitarian and security situation in the north calls for the development of a clear nutritional strategy for return and early recovery, according to the cluster, prompting the establishment of a committee to review the data and results of previous nutritional surveys in northern Uganda and Karamoja with view to recommending effective strategies to deal with nutritional problems.

Protection

The 127 child protection committees (CPCs) established represent a coverage of 75 per cent of Acholi sub-counties, 63 per cent of Lango, and 40 per cent of Teso. The support provided by CPCs includes referral to specialized and mainstream services such as police and health centres, temporary care arrangements, counselling, and family/community mediation. To ensure comprehensive reporting across sub-regions, a standardized format for all CPCs will be introduced in September.

In Karamoja, coordinated efforts to support the reintegration of over 300 women and children returned from Kampala and other urban centres, as well as efforts to mitigate the migration out of Karamoja have continued.

IV. THE MONTH AHEAD

Peace Consultation on Accountability and Reconciliation: In an effort to involve communities in the ongoing Juba peace process, the Kitgum NGO Forum (KINGFO) and Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) are organising a series of consultative meetings on agenda item number three – accountability and reconciliation – with communities across 12 sub-counties of Kitgum. Radio talk shows, peace prayers and public marches, demonstrations of traditional justice systems, essay writing contests and games/sports events will also be held. The final consensus meeting will be held on 28 August. Video and written documentation of the events will be provided to the negotiation teams at Juba.

Consolidated Appeal 2008: OCHA will hold its annual CAP workshop in Kampala from 21 to 22 August, bringing together partners from UN agencies and international organizations, national and international NGOs, national and local government and donor countries.