



UGANDA HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT

1 – 31 AUGUST 2007

AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

- **Serious flooding across eastern Uganda and parts of northern Uganda has affected tens of thousands of people**
- **Tensions in eastern DRC have led to influxes of Congolese into western Uganda, with some 12,000 to 15,000 Congolese currently sheltering on the Uganda side of the border**

I. GENERAL HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

SECURITY

In northern Uganda the security situation remains stable, with the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement holding. On three occasions, suspected Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) elements were reported to have engaged in food raids; the incidents were non-aggressive. Two additional sightings of suspected LRA elements were also reported during the month. Reports of criminal activities in northern Uganda, particularly in Gulu district, continue to increase; nightly police patrols and increasing community vigilance are being organized.

In Karamoja, the UPDF continued forceful disarmament operations, with some casualties reported. In two separate incidents, convoys including World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) vehicles came under attack; no injuries or damages reported.

In Katakwi and Amuria, Karimojong incursions have reduced during the reporting period due to flooding in the frontline sub-counties, which has cut off entry points often used illegally armed groups. Deployment of Anti Stock Theft Units (ASTUs) along the frontline sub-counties in Abim and Moroto district for Karamoja has also helped to control Karimojong activities.

ACCESS

Most areas of northern Uganda are accessible without military escort. Since the decision by the Italian non-governmental organization AVSI to discontinue using military escorts in Pader district, only WFP continues to use military escorts for its food aid distributions. Residents are moving throughout northern Uganda without restriction.

Heavy rains and flooding have left many roads and bridges in eastern Uganda and parts of northern Uganda impassable. Major roads and bridges have been badly damaged with deep gullies, potholes, washing away of gravel, broken culverts and blocked side drains reported. An assessment in Amuria district reported that 206 kilometres of the 308 km of the district road network are impassable for vehicles. Of the remaining 102 km, 57 km are in good, 23 km in fair and 22 in very bad condition. The rains have also increased the growth in bushy areas, blocking community access roads. As a result of the flooding and attendant damages, populations in remote areas are unable to access basic services. Humanitarian service delivery has also been constrained.

POPULATION MOVEMENT

Movement out of camps continues as the dry season approaches; monitoring activities confirm that internally displaced persons (IDPs) are moving to their parishes of origin, settling in villages which offer safe water points, schools and health centres. Movement to villages with no services is limited.

The brutal murder of a couple in Opit sub-county, **Gulu** district, sparked a temporary reverse trend in local population movement. The couple, who had returned to their village of origin, were murdered during a robbery. In the wake of the incident, many internally displaced persons (IDPs) report the maintenance of a hut in the main camps to store valuable items.

Lack of thatching materials, poor access roads in return areas and the threat of unexploded ordnance (UXO) continue to constrain the return process. Abandoned houses in IDP camps are reportedly being misused for garbage collection, defecation and animal keeping, thus raising health and hygiene concerns.

However, the proposed demolition of these huts has raised human rights concerns among members of the protection cluster; alternative options to address the situation are being explored.

An assessment of the progress in and challenges to the return process was conducted in Lamwo sub-county, **Kitgum** district, which found that the majority of the displaced population remains in IDP camps, with only one quarter of IDPs having moved to transit sites or villages of origin. Many of the IDPs said they would prefer to return to their villages of origin rather than transit sites. The displaced remaining in IDP camps often travel to their villages of origin to farm their land. Those who have moved to transit sites leave their school-age children in the camps to access education, which raises protection concerns.

Another serious challenge to the return process raised by the Lamwo assessment is the need to bury the remains of those killed in the conflict and to perform traditional cleansing rituals in affected areas. However, the IDPs expressed optimism that, if the Juba talks progress as planned, they would be able to leave the camps by December.

In **Lira** and **Oyam**, the return process continues with over 90 per cent of the IDP population having returned to their villages of origin. According to the latest information, only 17,238 IDPs remain in nine camps in the two districts. However, as the camp population continues to decrease, the proportion of extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs) unable to make the journey back home and thus remaining in camps is increasing.

In **Katakwi** and **Amuria**, many of the formerly displaced who had returned to their villages of origin were forced back into the camps by heavy rains and flooding. Several thousands former IDPs were affected, with 60 per cent seeking shelter with friends and family or moving into camps located at higher elevations, while 40 per cent have sought shelter in institutions such as schools and health centres.

DRC REFUGEES CROSS INTO UGANDA

On 21 August, some 10,000 Congolese were reported to have crossed the border into Kisoro district of Uganda, fleeing insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The majority of the Congolese returned to their home country within two days; however approximately 1,500 remained in Uganda, most of them women and children. Approximately 200 of the Congolese moved to the UNHCR concentration point at Nyakabanda, some 15 km from the border, where they are being provided shelter, food and non-food items, water and sanitation and health assistance by UNHCR, with support from WFP, UNICEF, URCS and MSF-France.

Additional influxes of Congolese refugees have been reported during the first week of September, with an estimated 25,000 to 35,000 Congolese having spent the nights of 4 and 5 September on the Uganda side of the border at Bunagana. Most of the men have been crossing back into the DRC to check on their properties during the day, leaving behind 12,000 to 15,000 women and children. Nearly all of them are staying with Congolese relatives and friends.

II. SPECIAL – EASTERN UGANDA FLOODING

Unusually heavy rainfall since July 2007 has led to severe flooding and waterlogging across many parts of eastern Uganda, including Katakwi, Amuria, Kumi and Bukedea districts in the Teso sub-region, Manafwa, Bududa, Sironko, Bukwo and Kapchorwa districts in Elgon sub-region. In response to the flooding, the Government of Uganda dispatched two joint Government-UN-NGO assessment missions to the affected areas in the last week of August.

According to the assessments, more than 20 fatalities have been attributed to the flooding and associated illness. Some 10,000 households (estimated 50,000 people) in Teso sub-region report damage to their homes. Relatively few (less than one per cent) of affected households in Elgon sub-region report complete destruction of their shelter, but those whose homes had been flooded or destroyed lost essential items such as bedding, utensils and water storage containers.

An estimated 29,000 households (145,000 people) have lost their first season harvest in part or in full, including 10,000 households in Katakwi district, 10,000 in Amuria district, 4,000 in Bukedea district and 1,000 in Kumi district of Teso sub-region and 4,000 households in Elgon sub-region. Many households have harvested prematurely rather than allow the crops to continue rotting in the fields; however, there is little dry ground and limited sunny intervals for drying and processing the crops. Cassava and groundnuts crops have been almost entirely destroyed; millet and sorghum crops suffered post-harvest damage due to the wet conditions. Additionally, the planting of second season crops has been delayed by the flooding. Food shortages, increased malnutrition rates and further displacement are anticipated as a result.

Unprotected water sources in the affected areas have been contaminated and there is evidence that some boreholes and shallow wells may also be contaminated. Many pit latrines – particularly in sandy-soiled Katakwi – have been flooded and/or collapsed. Residents now fear to use remaining latrines, increasing the possible outbreak of diseases attributable to contaminated water sources and unhygienic sanitation.

A 30 per cent surge in cases of malaria, diarrhoea and respiratory infections has been reported in flood-affected districts. Damage to water and sanitation facilities has increased the likelihood of a cholera outbreak; however, there is little preparedness to respond to such an event. No district has an outbreak response plan, diagnosis facilities or isolation ward/treatment centre in place. Moreover, in addition to the lack of first- and second-line anti-malarial drugs, as well as essential supplies including antibiotics, intravenous (IV) fluids, cannulas and syringes, Health Centres in the affected areas suffer from severe understaffing, which has also hampered the response. None of the laboratories located in Health Centre IIIs are functioning at present. Village health teams (VHTs) are not active.

According to the assessment findings, 174 schools have been damaged by the flooding: 119 in Teso and 55 in Elgon. Damages include waterlogged, flooded and/or collapsed sanitation facilities; damage to school facilities and teacher housing, resulting in the displacement of teachers; and/or damage to access roads.

Concern has also been raised over the potential for increased incidence of crime, including robbery of abandoned homes, while incidents of women and girls' engaging in sex-for-food activities have been reported.

Additionally, on 5 September, the Katakwi district authorities indicated that sustained heavy rains since the beginning of the month had worsened the situation, flooding nine IDP camps and necessitating the urgent relocation of nearly 11,400 IDPs. District authorities have urgently requested shelter materials, including tents, tarpaulins, blankets and mosquito nets, as well as food for an estimated 3,000 households. Mobile health facilities and water and sanitation facilities to replace those contaminated and destroyed by the flooding are also required.

Meanwhile, flooding in Lira district of Lango sub-region has severely affected an estimated 3,395 households and displaced 300 to 400 households. The number of affected households is expected to increase as figures from additional sub-counties are made available. One death in Lira district has been attributed to the flooding.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) has taken the lead in coordinating the national and international response to the flooding, organizing, with the support of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the two joint inter-agency assessment missions dispatched to Teso and Elgon sub-regions from 24 to 28 August. On the basis of the assessments, the OPM has elaborated a joint response plan, prioritizing action for some 45,000 households in the areas of shelter, food security, water and sanitation, health, non-food items, education and infrastructure (roads) rehabilitation. Line ministries, district authorities and/or United Nations agencies have been designated to work coordinate action in each of the identified areas.

As of 7 September, WFP expected to begin distributing a one-month food ration of maize meal, pulses and vegetable oil to 3,084 households in Magoro camp, Katakwi district.

The UNICEF has delivered supplies of vaccines and gas (for cold chain management) to Teso sub-region. In conjunction with the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) and Ministry of Health, some 2,819 long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLINs) have been distributed in Teso and 1,024 in Elgon.

With the NGO PSI, UNICEF plans distribute jerry cans, soap and water purification products to 15,000 affected families in Teso sub-region and will conduct hygiene education on how to use the products. Sealing off of dangerously damaged latrines has already begun. The UNICEF also will provide 2,693 family kits to supplement the 1,150 available from the URCS (including 600 kits from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)). Some 4,950 households in Teso, Elgon and Lango are to receive shelter and non-food assistance. The UNHCR reports that it can make available plastic sheeting for shelter for 500 households, as well as 1,000 buckets.

With the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and Christian Children's Fund (CCF), UNICEF will organize assessments of affected schools. Some 35 large tents, suitable for temporary schools, are on hand if needed. The final term of the 2007 school year is scheduled to begin on 17 September.

The UNICEF has also begun cholera prevention activities, including making available pre-positioned supplies and starting a sensitization campaign for affected populations. Having agreed messages with the Ministry of Health, eight local and national radio stations in Lango, Teso and Elgon sub-regions have been commissioned to broadcast the radio spots and two film vans have been dispatched to Katakwi and Amuria.

In a typical year, seasonal rains can be expected to continue through the month of November.

III. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE BY CLUSTER

EDUCATION

The education cluster reports that co-curricular activities such as music, dance and drama (MDD) and sports are increasingly being used as therapy for traumatized children and for advocacy in support of the Go Back to School (GBS) campaign. Winning schools from 14 of the 18 conflict affected districts of Acholi, Lango, Teso and Karamoja sub-regions participated in the National Music, Drama and Dance (MDD) Festival this year. The MDD Festival helped to raise community awareness on barriers to formal education including displacement, conflict, violence (corporal punishment, SGBV), disease and poverty among others.

In Lango sub-region, over 1,100 children participated in the first round of Back to School Football and Netball League competitions that have just concluded in Lira district. The back to school campaign resulted in attendance at school of over 70 per cent of pupils. The leagues will continue until the end of third term in November.

Also in Lango, 240 pupils benefited from ideal creative workshops to improve their coping mechanisms. Therapy and stimulation sessions for 320 children with special needs and their caregivers were conducted in Otuke County.

In other districts, including Amuru, sports equipment and musical instruments were distributed to 116 children in selected primary and secondary schools. Also in Amuru, a 16-week cycle of creative games workshops for groups of traumatized children needing help to overcome behavioural problems were organized. Self-help group sessions for parents to improve their parenting schools were carried out. Primary school teachers were trained in transforming primary schools into peaceable communities in Koch Goma, Alero and Pagak. In addition, 14 teachers from Koch Goma were trained for four days.

In Pader, 142 tarpaulins were provided to 15 primary schools for the establishment of temporary classrooms, benefiting 9,366 pupils. Many of these schools had run classes under shade trees since they

returned to their original sites. Palwong Primary School, whose roof had been blown off, was renovated and provided with desks. Under the Displaced Schools Project, 450 desks, 77 blackboards, and scholastic materials were provided to eight schools. Twelve temporary day care shelters were set up for infants of child mothers attending catch-up education programmes.

The OCHA notes that, in Amuru, the relocation of displaced schools to their original sites is still challenge. Only nine out of the 62 displaced schools have so far relocated to their original sites. The DEO has submitted a request to the humanitarian community to support another seven schools to relocate to enable them open for the third academic term.

In Lango, although 98% of displaced schools have returned to their original sites, infrastructural rehabilitation, staff housing, inadequate pit latrines and shortage of desks continue to hamper the smooth running of education activities.

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND HIV/AIDS

The Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS cluster reports that the response to the Marburg epidemic in Kamwenge district concluded during the month of August. The outbreak, which has been successfully contained, saw two confirmed cases, one of which was fatal. An ecological study will be conducted into the source of the outbreak. Meanwhile, Marburg surveillance, social mobilization and psycho-social support activities continue in Kamwenge and Ibanda districts, with health workers in Kamwenge, Ibanda and Kampala having received training on how to identify the disease. An isolation unit with ambulance has been established at Mulago Hospital in preparedness for any new case.

Current nutrition data shows that while prevalence of severe malnutrition is decreasing in northern Uganda, the prevalence of general acute malnutrition (GAM) is increasing, possibly due to the prevalence of moderate malnutrition in return areas. The health cluster acknowledges that more attention should be paid to moderate malnutrition.

In Lira, Gulu, Amuru, Oyam and Apac, all therapeutic feeding centres (TFCs) and OTPs will be handed over to district administration.

Partners working on HIV/AIDS issues are reviewing the Great Lakes Initiative on AIDS (GLIA) strategic plan, with finalization of the national strategic plan continuing. The drug supply chain remains fragile in northern districts, with many health facilities continuing to report stock-outs of anti-malarial and antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, as well as HIV testing kits. In some locations, patients have not received their ARVs in three months.

The critical shortage of human resources in the health field remains one of the greatest challenges to providing health care services, especially in remote return areas of northern Uganda. The few health staff present in those areas are often absent from their posts; the planned incentive scheme has not yet been actualized.

The OCHA reports that, in Kitgum, the health cluster has instituted a working group for Behavioural Change Communication/Information, Education and Communication (BCC/IEC) following concern that too many agencies are developing and disseminating BCC/IEC materials, some of which do not reflect the realities on the ground. The working group will be responsible for the revision of materials in circulation, development of IEC materials based on the existing needs, development of an integrated BCC/IEC work plan and monitoring the impact of the materials.

There are an estimated 43,000 orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) in Kitgum district, yet there are only nine agencies providing these children with services. OVCs mainly receive scholastic materials, school uniforms and tuition fees, but OVCs out of school are not getting enough attention. The Health cluster resolved that the issue of OVCs should be treated as cross-cutting among all clusters. It was also resolved that all agencies working with OVCs should provide comprehensive programs, extending to children's non-scholastic needs and support to their guardians and caretakers at home.

An inter-agency monitoring of HIV/AIDS services in Pader showed that care and support services for patients is still lacking in most of the sites visited and that there is only weak follow up on babies born to HIV positive mothers, while the replacement feeding program for babies born to HIV positive mothers is faced with supply chain problems.

Also in Pader, seven children were investigated for symptoms of measles. One tested positive for epidemic measles while four tested positive for rubella measles. However, there is no fear of an outbreak.

In Lira and Oyam, low rates of male participation in reproductive health and prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) programmes poses a challenge. The DDHS informed that, of 449 pregnant mothers tested for HIV, 66 were positive, but no information on the status of their spouses was available.

PROTECTION

Family separations continue to be a main focus of concern for the Protection cluster, particularly for young children; in Gulu, sensitization campaigns are reporting a positive impact with parents addressing childcare needs and spending shorter time at return sites before returning to the camps.

A total 16,976 children and youth are benefiting from vulnerability reduction activities in Gulu, Kitgum and Lira districts, including education, vocational training, support for income generating activities (IGA), youth groups, psycho-social counselling and peer support groups.

A gradual increase in community reporting and action against perpetrators of gender based violence GBV has been witnessed, but the capacity of health staff and police to respond within 72 hours remains weak. In Pader, health centres lack drugs and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) kits; PEP kits were distributed to six health centres in Pader at the end of August.

In Gulu, protection cluster members visited the Lugore prison farm to discuss difficult living circumstances. Advocacy with the High Court and Magistrate Courts has resulted in a review of six cases involving minors.

In Lango, the last of a series of human rights training programmes for Special Police Constables (SPCs) was held; more than 300 SPCs have received training in human rights and follow-up monitoring and evaluation of the trained SPCs is in progress.

The Kitgum District Human Rights Promotion and Protection Sub-Committee (DHRPP) is undertaking advocacy with district authorities to improve access to police services. An increasing number of complaints concerning demands by police for fees for their services has been recorded. A joint monitoring of Kitgum Prison was conducted from 13 to 17 August: out of 87 detainees interview only one reported that he had legal representation, the rest either did not understand what legal representation meant or did not know how to obtain legal representation.

Discussions were carried out with key stakeholders in Acholi and Lango sub-regions on the property restitution process; feedback will be channelled into a report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

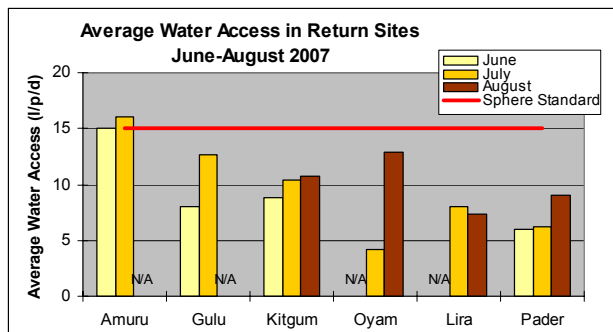
The OHCHR provided financial and technical support to a civil society initiative in drafting a common position to advise the Government and LRA consultations concerning agenda item 3 (Accountability and Reconciliation) of the Juba peace process.

The OCHA reports that, in Kitgum, victims of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) can now access health care services with or without the P3 police form. A directive to this effect was issued by the District Health Officer in a letter written to the personnel in charge of district health facilities.

In Pader, GBV victims continuously fail to access justice, with lack of police transport to take offenders to police stations cited as one cause. Victims are often required to pay for the transportation of offenders to the police stations, which has discouraged many of them from seeking legal redress.

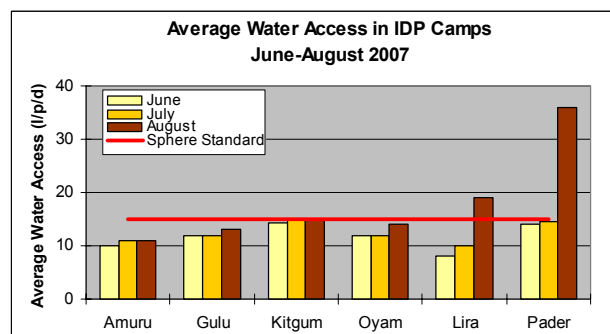
In Lira and Oyam, there was a significant reduction in the number of protection cases in August, from 243 cases in July to 95 in August. Overall, the main protection incidents involved UXOs, GBV, child protection issues and land disputes. The OHCHR reported that remand periods in Lango are very long, with some prisoners spending up to six years on remand. A total of 316 inmates are on remand, 173 of whom have been there beyond the statutory period.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

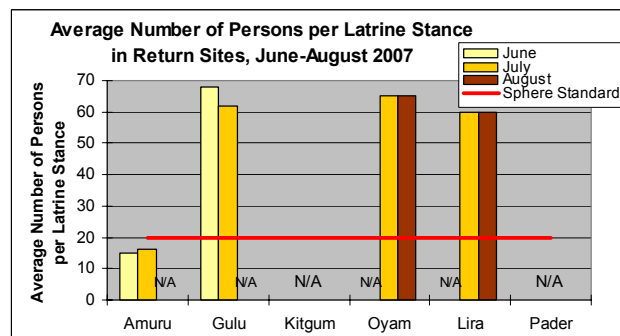


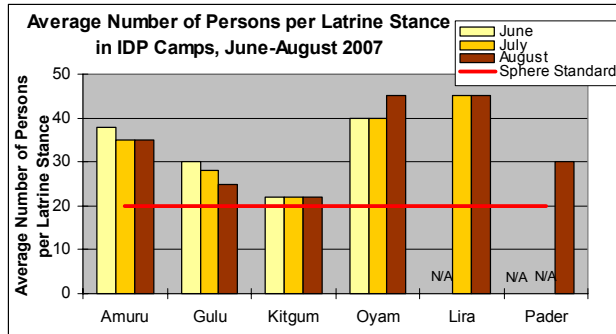
The WASH cluster reports continued inadequate water and sanitation facilities in transit sites. Substantial improvements were recorded in terms of access to safe water in Oyam district, with an increase in the average number of litres of water per person per day (l/p/d) rising from four in July to 13 by the end of August. Pader district also reported an increase from six to nine l/p/d, while average litres per person per day in Kitgum also increased slightly. Data from Gulu and Amuru districts was not available for the month.

In IDP camps, Pader district recorded a sharp increase in average litres per person per day, from 15 in July to 36 in August, attributable to completion of boreholes and decreasing camp population. Moderate increases were reported in other districts.



Access to latrines is a major challenge in the transit sites, with no substantial improvement during the reporting period. Access to sanitation facilities in the IDP camps seems to be stagnating; no improvements were recorded in Amuru, Kitgum and Lira districts, while the situation in Oyam district deteriorated from approximately 40 persons per stance to 45.





Hygiene messages were disseminated via radio in Lira district and intensive hygiene education campaigns were conducted in two schools. Hygiene promotion activities aimed at returnee populations also took place in Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts, in addition to 30 hygiene education campaigns in IDP camps in Acholi and Lango sub-regions.

The WASH Cluster also reports that it has revised its WASH transition strategy to take note of the parish approach.

The OCHA notes that operation and maintenance (O&M) of water points, especially motorized systems, is a growing challenge as partners conduct exit planning. Several partners have not provided the district offices with the O&M costs for their systems. An O&M thematic working group has been formed to streamline these issues and chart ways of enhancing sustainability of water systems.

Accessibility to WASH facilities for persons with disabilities (PWDs) is another challenge. Many toilets and latrines do not have provision for the needs of disabled persons.

No monthly cluster report has been received from the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Early Recovery and Food Security clusters as of 7 September 2007.

IV. THE MONTH AHEAD

The OHCHR plans to train Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) and ASTUs on human rights during September.