



UGANDA HUMANITARIAN UPDATE 1 – 30 September 2007

HIGHLIGHTS

- **NEW CASE OF MARBURG FEVER CONFIRMED IN KAMWENGE DISTRICT**
- **KITGUM EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT RESULTS RELEASED**
- **NUMBER OF NORTHERN UGANDANS ON ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY UP 500% OVER PAST THREE YEARS**

I. GENERAL HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

SECURITY

The security situation in most areas of the Lango and Acholi sub-regions remained calm during the reporting period, with no reports of incidents related to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), although unorganized criminal activity occurred. A reduction in the number of petty thefts was recorded in Lira district. In **Pader** district, the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) mine action team recovered 22 pieces of unexploded ordnance (UXO) from two sites in Omit sub-county.

In **Kitgum** meanwhile, there have been reports of a group of some fifteen unidentified gunmen engaging in food raids, looting and temporary abductions in Lagoro sub-county. While the UPDF is pursuing the group and have stepped up security patrols, there has been some localized return from transit sites to IDP camps, with approximately 20 individual returning to Amida IDP camp.

An incident of cattle rustling was also reported in Mucwini on the 17 September, with eight herds of cattle stolen but later recovered at Akara village by a combined force of UPDF and Local Defence Units (LDUs).

Following several complaints of harassment of civilians by Sudanese nationals in areas bordering Sudan, the Kitgum Resident District Commissioner (RDC) has addressed the issue with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Ministry will deploy immigration and police officers at strategic points along the border by year's end.

The UPDF has begun disarmament of civilian provided with small arms at the height of the conflict with the LRA, including local council and district administration staff. Disarmament and integration of the Local Defense Unit (LDU) into the UPDF also continues.

In **Katakwi and Amuria**, suspected illegally-armed Karimojong made attempts to raid animals in parts of Ngariam, Magoro and Usuk sub-counties of Katakwi district, despite the floods (high water levels in the swampy areas on the border between the Teso and Karamoja sub-regions had led to decreased Karimojong activity in previous months). One group of suspected Karimojong were engaged by the Anti Stock Theft Unit (ASTU) in an incident in Usuk sub-county following an aborted raid, leaving two dead, including one herdsman.

In **Karamoja**, there were a number of security incidents between illegally-armed Karimojong and the UPDF throughout the month; however, the security situation deteriorated sharply at the end of the month, particularly in Kaabong district, with three consecutive days of clashes between illegally-armed Karimojong and UPDF forces engaged in disarmament operations. There are unconfirmed reports of casualties on both sides. District officials and the UPDF believe that the Karimojong in question possibly comprise a group of 500 to 1,000 armed men and have over 40,000 cattle under their control.

In mid-September, the Minister of Water, State Minister for Karamoja, Army Chief of Staff, Police Inspector-General and Presidential Advisory for Karamoja met with regional political leaders and senior UPDF officers in Moroto to review security and disarmament progress in Karamoja.

ACCESS

The predominant constraint on access during the reporting period has been the flooding in parts of eastern and northern Uganda. Many roads and bridges have been affected, with roads cut at Komolo bridge (Soroti-Katakwi link); Awoja bridge (Soroti-Mbale link); Usuku and Domolo, among others. Access on to Magoro sub-county in Katakwi district and from Mbale to Soroti at the Agu bridge is also restricted.

Boats are being used to ferry travellers from one side of water expanses to the other at Komolo and Awoja bridges. Transport fares and commodity prices have escalated

In **Kitgum**, the district authorities have constituted a taskforce to oversee rehabilitation of the airstrip, dedicating some eight million Ugandan shillings (approximately US\$) for the initiative. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has agreed to lift the ban on the airstrip if some minimum standards are met including fencing the strip, filling pot holes on the runway, trimming trees and repairing broken concrete slabs. The Aswa River has subsided somewhat at the Aswa Bridge on the Kitgum-Gulu, permitting light vehicles to use the route.

POPULATION MOVEMENT

In **Gulu** and **Amuru**, inter-agency return monitoring is ongoing, with lack of thatching materials, inadequate access to clean water, sanitation and health facilities continuing to be cited as critical challenges to the return process. Returnees have also expressed concern about security in the absence of police at posts since the UPDF has withdrawn from most sites.

In **Pader**, a reduction in the number of returnees has been reported, with lack of thatching materials being the major factor cited. Some IDPs have reportedly been forcefully evicted by land owners wanting to develop their land. The issue has been presented to the population movement committee, which has decided to register the evicted IDPs and present the issue to the local government authorities.

In **Kitgum**, increased movement out of camps to transit sites in or near villages of origin has been reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). An estimated 92,000 persons had moved out of the IDP camps as of mid-September, representing a ten per cent increase over the August figures. It is unclear what has contributed to the increased movement as thatching grass has yet to mature, although recent distributions of some 2,000 tarpaulins may have posed an incentive to returns. In general, IDPs are returning to their parishes of origin, settling together at sites near services such as safe water points, schools and health centres. Expectations of additional returns with the advent of the dry season (November/December) are high; UNHCR is planning to train all district LCIs by November 2007 to assist the return monitoring.

In **Lira**, UNHCR expects additional returns before the end of the year – up to 98 per cent of the original displaced IDP population – once the effects of flooding and water-logging subside; already, more than 90 per cent of the displaced have completed the returns process. Apart from those identified as extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs) and those objecting to return due to trauma, there are only a few IDPs wishing to remain in the camps. However, as the camps are hosted on private land, this is causing some friction with landowners.

On 11 and 12 September, the official launch of the Camp Closure programme took place in Oyam and Lira districts respectively. Camp phase out activities in the Lango sub-region are expected to be completed by the end 2007.

UGANDA FLOODS

On 21 September, the humanitarian community launched a Flash Appeal for US\$ 41 million, based on planning for some 300,000 people being affected by the flooding that has ravaged parts of eastern and northern Uganda since late August. Unusually heavy rainfalls since July 2007 led to the flooding, which has affected more than thirty districts to date. In responding to the flooding, the humanitarian community has established a regional coordination hub in Soroti, with cluster leads for each of the clusters active in the country – including the Logistics cluster, established specifically for the floods response – in residence. Dedicated situation reports on the floods are being issued twice weekly by OCHA, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They can be accessed at www.reliefweb.int.

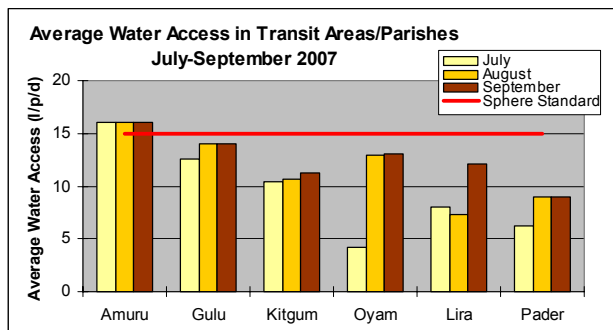
MARBURG FEVER

A third case of Marburg Fever has been confirmed in Kamwenge district. The patient is currently being treated in the Marburg isolation ward at Mulago National Referral Hospital. The patient, who has been employed at the same mine identified as the source of the June/July outbreak, was part of the team that conducted the Marburg ecological survey at the mine in August. Tracing of the patient's contacts is

underway to ensure identification, testing and effective follow up. In July 2007, the Ministry of Health previously confirmed an outbreak of Marburg Fever, in which two cases were confirmed. One of the victims died of the illness on 14 July; the other was treated and discharged from Mulago Hospital.

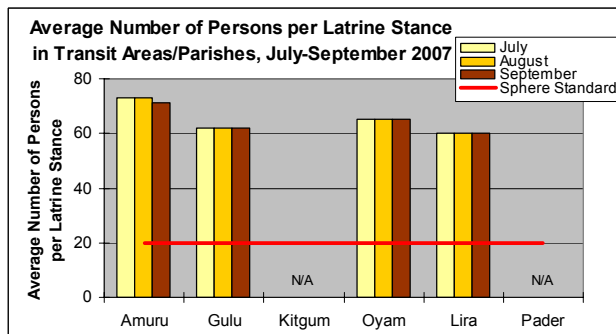
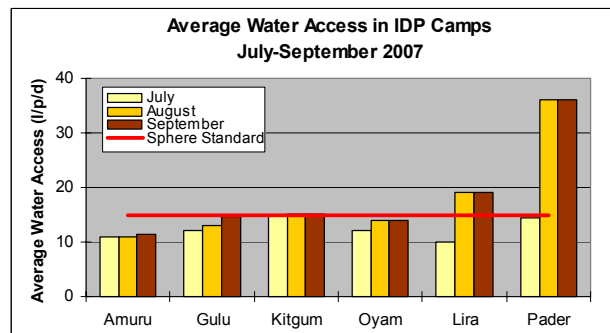
II. CLUSTER REPORTS

WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)



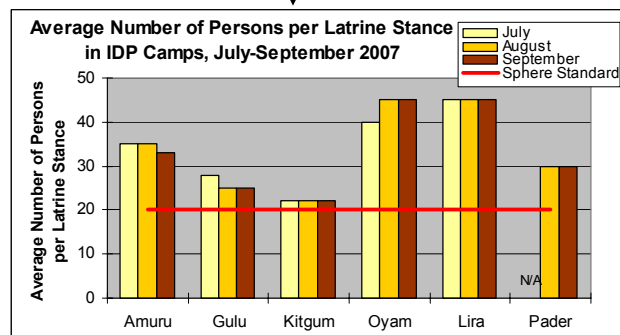
No major increase in the availability of clean drinking water in transit sites was recorded during the reporting period over the August figures for Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts. However, major increases were recorded in Lira district, from an average of eight litres/person/day (l/p/d) to 12 l/p/d. The cluster attributes this increase to the fact that the September figures have been calculated, while previous data was based on estimates. Gulu (16 l/p/d) and Amuru (14 l/p/d) standard are close to the SPHERE standard (15 l/p/d), while Kitgum (11 l/p/d) and Pader (9 l/p/d) remain below.

Average water access in IDP camps remained at or above SPHERE standards during the reporting period in Oyam, Kitgum, Lira and Pader district. Implementation of water supply activities in the camps focused mainly on maintenance of existing facilities, except in Amuru and Gulu, where three motorized water systems were completed, increasing average litres/person/day from 11 to 11.5 and 13. to 14.6 respectively.



Access to sanitation in IDP camps, meanwhile, seems to have plateaued; no major improvements were recorded.

Access to latrines remains a major problem in transit areas; despite ongoing activities, no major improvement was reported during the reporting period.



Hygiene promotion remains a major component of WASH interventions in IDP camps and transit areas: in Lango, hygiene education continued with a focus on hand-washing with soap; in Acholi, soap was distributed to 9,420 households, while 31 hygiene promotion activities took place. School health clubs were formed in three primary schools in Gulu.

The WASH cluster continued to form and train water and sanitation committees and train caretakers and pump mechanics to ensure sustainability of existing WASH facilities. Eight committees were formed and trained in Lira and Gulu, and 15 hand pump mechanics were trained and equipped with tools in Pader.

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND HIV/AIDS

The Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS cluster reported on antiretroviral therapy (ART) data for 2007, noting a more than 500 per cent increase in the number of patients on ART between 2004 and 2007 across the regions of northern Uganda and Karamoja. However, the total number of ART patients – 10,467 – represents only 39 per cent of the estimated 27,000 patients who should be on treatment in these regions, while the frequent stock-out of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) and HIV testing kits remains a major challenge to access to HIV/AIDS services. The number of active ART sites increased from five in 2004 to 35 in 2006; there are plans to create 10 more ART sites in the Karamoja region.

Despite these increases, as evidenced by the Services Availability Mapping (SAM) survey done in the Acholi sub-region in 2006, availability of treatment is still skewed toward the urban centres. As IDPs return to their original homes, this skew will further problematize access to ART services. To improve access, the frequent drug and test kits stock-out needs urgently to be addressed. The quality of care at the existing ART sites also needs to be improved through capacity building; support, supervision and mentoring of health workers; improvement of infrastructure and equipment; and technical assistance to the District Health Teams (DHTs).

The Health cluster concluded that the erratic supply of drugs, especially anti-malarials and ARVs, remains a major challenge to delivering good quality health services in northern Uganda and Karamoja. There is a fundamental problem in the drug order and supply chain from the Government-owned National Medical Store (NMS) to the districts. This problem has been highlighted in flood-affected districts, but the situation is the same, if not worse, in other districts. Proactive engagement with the NMS to see resolve the problem is needed.

Additional reporting from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in **Gulu and Amuru** indicates that low staffing levels continue to disrupt the delivery of health services: Gulu has only 26 per cent of required staff, while Amuru has only 34 per cent. Given the low staffing levels, efforts are underway to train more Village Health Teams (VHTs) to fill the gap. The target is to establish 2,000 VHTs per district.

In **Pader**, 174 children have been infected with river blindness in the Barayom area. Since this issue was first reported two months ago, no action has been taken by the office of the district health officer.

In **Kitgum**, the district has upgraded four health centres from level II to level III beginning in the financial year 2007/8, namely Palabek Ogili, Okidi, Akuna Laber and Pajimo. The district has requested that humanitarian agencies provide support to make these units perform to their upgraded standard.

EDUCATION

The Education cluster reports that the “Go Back to School” (GBS) campaign, as well as the floods in parts of the country, have afforded opportunities to strengthen partnership and coordination between District Education Officers and cluster members.

District chapters and clubs of GEM – an empowerment programme that equips children and young people with psychosocial life and leadership skills and provides a peer support network for children at risk of dropping out of school or who have never enrolled – have been opened in Amuru, Kitgum and Pader. Seventy-five per cent of the membership is female.

Sports and recreation as psychosocial therapy and an important part of the school curriculum continue to be promoted through provision of safe playground equipment and introduction of sports programmes.

School inspections are ongoing in Kitgum and Pader district primary schools by the District Education Officials, with support from the cluster.

Additional reporting from OCHA indicates that the teacher-to-pupil ratio remains critical in **Amuru** district. Out of the required 1,039 teachers, only 500 have been deployed to handle the 53,138 pupils in the district. In addition, teachers' accommodation is still a challenge, and most schools cannot provide adequate housing for the seven teachers each school is required to have.

The majority of childhood development centres constructed and supported by UNICEF in **Gulu** are non functional; the Sector Working Group has recommended that these centres be dismantled and instead be set up in return areas where the need is high.

In **Kitgum**, some 64 schools have moved back to their pre-conflict parishes, while 28 schools have yet to return. Parents have resorted to leaving their children in camps and prompting drop in enrolment affecting mainly girl children. To redress the phenomenon, a joint child protection and education cluster meeting has been planned to agree a strategy of mobilizing community support for the construction of temporary schools return areas.

No monthly cluster reports were received from the following clusters prior to the issuance of this update: Camp Coordination/Camp Management, Early Recovery, Food Security and Protection.

III. OTHER HUMANITARIAN UPDATES

Additional reporting by OCHA indicates that, in the area of **food security**, several camps in Gulu and Amuru have not received food aid for two consecutive distribution cycles, due to poor road conditions caused by the heavy rains. In support of livelihoods, 100 farmers' groups were supported to open an estimated 800 acres of land. Fish ponds were also constructed and stocked with an estimated 7,800 fingerlings in Awoo and Tegutu in Gulu district, while 18 farmer field schools were supported with 180 goats with each group receiving 10 goats. Also in Gulu, 234 households were trained in making energy saving stoves as well as 149 households in Amuru. In Gulu, 75 acres of groundnuts seeds multiplication programme were initiated.

Results from the Kitgum Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) conducted between March and April 2007 were released, indicating that 13 per cent of households are food insecure, 55 per cent are moderately food insecure, 14 per cent are moderately food secure and 18 per cent are fully food secure. Women headed 28 per cent of households in the sampled households: on average, households headed by women were more common in mother camps (31 per cent), as opposed to 21 per cent in transit sites and villages of origin. On average, 60 per cent of households had access to land, while only one quarter of those interviewed possessing any livestock or poultry. Food aid contributed 40 to 50 per cent of the average household's food basket, while approximately one per cent of children were found to be severely malnourished. The most frequently self-reported diseases were malaria and diarrhoea. Thirty per cent of households reported that it took less than half an hour to fetch water, 32 per cent reported that water collection took at least one hour, while 27 per cent reported at least two hours and 11 per cent half a day or more.

Additionally, the Kitgum district veterinary officer has confirmed an outbreak of foot and mouth disease and bovine fever in some parts of the district, attributed to the heavy rains and flooding. Some, 6,000 livestock have been vaccinated against the diseases. The district has requested additional vaccines and advised all agencies dealing in animal restocking/husbandry to liaise with the district veterinary office to avoid bringing in animals from other districts, some of which have been quarantined.

In **Lira** district, an assessment revealed that up to 91 per cent of the 7,500 households sampled depend on crop production as their major source of income, while and only one per cent of the households owned any type of livestock. This analysis confirms the likelihood of food insecurity in coming months due to the substantial damage incurred to crops by the heavy rains and the need to diversify income sources.

On **protection**, community sensitization on human rights was organized in nine locations in Gulu and Amuru districts, reaching 2,375 people. Community dialogue and mediation meetings on land disputes were also conducted.

In Pader, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID) provided two police vehicles to facilitate district patrols. Transport constraints had been common, especially regarding transport of suspected criminals: in many cases, the victims have had to pay for transportation for suspected offenders. Pader district still lacks a Grade One magistrate; this absence has constrained capacity to handle capital offences. Efforts are ongoing to lobby the chief registrar, chief justice and the principal judge to appoint either a permanent grade one magistrate in Pader or one to visit on an ad hoc basis to review the numerous capital cases on remand at the Patongo prison.

Gender based violence (GBV) victims continue to experience constraints on their access to justice owing to a lack of medical doctors in Pader district and the continued refusal by clinical officers to examine victims/suspects. This problem is expected to continue until a Memorandum of Understanding is signed between the national Health cluster and the Ministry of Health to authorize clinical officers to examine GBV victims and suspects. In the meantime, agencies that have the capacity to transport victims and suspects to the Pajule Health Center IV have been requested to help.

Meanwhile, the number of defilement cases in the district was down from 85 to 65 in September: this could be attributed to a reduction in family separation, for which the proportion lowered from 77 per cent in July to 74 per cent in August.

Some 73 protection cases were registered in Lango sub-region in September, compared to 68 incidences in August and 112 in July. Most of the protection incidents (three murders, two mob justice incidents) occurred in the return areas. Public awareness initiatives on the prevention and prohibition of mob justice continue to be rolled out in Apac district. Referral for protection cases poses an ongoing challenge in terms of obtaining feedback, due to limited capacity on the ground: 11 cases were referred within the month, while only two received feedback. In terms of GBV, an improvement in case referrals was observed owing to intense information dissemination and awareness raising: 6,328 persons (1,881 males, 2,251 females and 2,196 children) were reached through awareness raising activities on GBV including debates, school straight talks, spot visits and discussions in trading centres, markets and water collection points, public dialogues in churches and door-to-door visits in camps.

The Ministry for Internal Affairs has completed recruitment of 479 personnel to be trained and deployed as special police constables (SPCs) in Kitgum sub-counties. Each sub-county is expected to receive 27 SPCs, while 10 will be deployed in Kitgum Town Council, following training in Katakwi. The Ministry has also donated two Landcruisers to the district for patrols and community policing. However, there are substantial logistical challenges to fuelling and maintaining the vehicles.

Human rights training for Anti Stock Theft Units (ASTUs) is taking place, including on the subjects of child protection, GBV, freedom of movement, human rights during arrest and detention and civil military cooperation. The training comes amidst growing accusation of abuses perpetrated by personnel of the units.

In terms of **non-food items (NFIs) and Family Shelter**, a post-distribution analysis determined that distributions were, in general, beneficial, participatory and cost-effective and aimed to strengthen PDCs. One of the key challenges noted was degree of understanding and appreciation/acceptance of the parish-based approach by some members of the community.

Four priority sub-clusters have been established in the area of **early recovery** in Gulu and Amuru districts, including livelihood, governance, peace building, and infrastructure rehabilitation.

Some 580 huts were destroyed in Pabbo camp in Amuru district by sub-county authorities without the consent of the owners, raising concerns about property ownership. The growing number of abandoned huts used as garbage and defecation sites is a critical area of concern.