

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- During the month of December, the most significant humanitarian issues were health concerns, particularly the outbreak of **Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever**. While the Ebola outbreak remained restricted to one district of western Uganda, it posed a source of grave concern and heightened surveillance countrywide. In Kitgum, the outbreak of Hepatitis E remained uncontained, while in Kumi and Bukedea, the measles outbreak confirmed in November was successfully contained.
- On 18 December, the **Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) consultations** completed after more than five weeks and visits to communities across northern Uganda, including the sites of attacks and massacres.
- The **US\$ 374 million 2008 Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for Uganda** was launched in Kampala on 10 December 2007.

II. SECURITY AND ACCESS

Security

The general security situation in **northern Uganda** remained calm during the reporting period, with isolated incidents of crime involving domestic violence, robbery and murder. Increased sightings of armed elements, suspected to be remnants of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) were reported in some sub-counties of Pader district. Gulu and Kitgum district did not report any LRA sightings. Gulu District, however, notes that the presence of illegal arms in the districts of Amuru and Gulu remains a significant challenge to improved security. The Protection cluster is working with security agencies to elaborate a strategy to rid return areas of illegal arms.

Occasional sightings of illegally armed Karimojong were reported in parts of **Lira**, although the presence of the Anti Stock Theft Units (ASTUs) is expected to contain possible increased raiding during the coming dry season. More than 1,000 rounds of ammunition were recovered by police from the railway yards in Lira municipality following a tip-off. The rounds were reportedly destined for sale in Kotido (Karamoja).

To improve security along the border between **Teso** and Karamoja, 800 highway patrol police are expected to be deployed in the coming weeks. The first group were deployed on 22 December 2007.

In **Karamoja**, 21 cattle raids – of which five were unsuccessful – and three ambushes were recorded during the month, while a cross border raid into Kenya was reportedly carried out by Jie Karimojong. The UPDF continued its disarmament operations, conducting eight cordon-and-search operations resulting in the arrest of more than 100 illegally-armed elements and the recovery of two guns. Additionally, a UPDF roadblock in Nakapiripirit District led to the recovery of three guns and 300 bullets from a private vehical. One death has been reported due to the disarmament operations, while 26 deaths were reported in conjunction with the raids and ambushes.

Access

Generally, all areas of operation were accessible to the humanitarian community without escorts, except in Karamoja where the use of military escorts continues to be required. In some areas, such as parts of Kitgum, the World Food Programme (WFP) continues to use military escorts for food convoys.

In terms of physical limitations to access, the largest constraint continued to be damage to roads and bridges wrought by the floods from July to October 2007. In particular, humanitarian access to remote location in the Teso sub-region continues to be very limited with most villages accessible only by foot paths or through unevenly cleared areas and at the risk of punctured tires. Major road works on the Soroti-Katakwi road continued, while most progress on the Magoro-Ngariam road in Katakwi District has been in terms of clearing the road. No major work has yet begun on the Awoja Bridge, where a 300 metre stretch of tarmac degenerated to gravel road due to the flood waters.

III. POPULATION MOVEMENT

Return movement among the displaced population has continued to gather pace in much of northern Uganda as the progressing dry season has meant that long grasses for thatching roofs are available. In **Kitgum**, 92,500 people, or nearly 32 per cent of the 306,000 persons displaced in the district at the start of 2005, have moved to transit sites, with an additional 13,000 persons have completed the return.

Similarly, in **Pader**, significant changes in population movement have been noted in northern parts of the district, with many IDPs moving to transit sites due to the availability of thatching grass. However, it remains difficult to

determine the actual percentage of the displaced population that has moved permanently to new sites of settlement (at transit sites) or to villages of origin. This is due to a pattern of mobility between two or more locations in which children, the elderly and other extremely vulnerable populations are left in the camps to remain within access of basic services, while household heads build new huts and/or tend to land in the return areas.

In **Gulu** and **Amuru**, radio announcements are being used to minimise seasonal grass burning, as they grasses are crucial for roofing new huts. In Amuru District, there were reports of returnees from Masindi District in need of humanitarian assistance. The District was to register and verify the returnees' status.

Abandoned huts in IDP camps across northern Uganda remain a source of concern for communities as they are frequently suspected of being used for criminal activities, as brothels, or as sites for garbage dumping or defecation. Also of concern in return areas across the Acholi region is the possible threat posed by landmines and other unexploded ordnance (UXO).

In **Teso**, population movement to areas of origin in eastern Katakwi and northern Amuria districts, as well as in Bukwo district of Sebei sub-region, has put pressure on the ASTUs for redeployment closer to the border with Karamoja.

The latest information on the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) remaining in camps, at transit sites, and in villages of origin is as follows:

Region	Original camp population (end 2005)	Estimated camp population May 2007	% of original camp population	Population in transit sites	% of original camp population	Population in villages of origin	% of original camp population
Acholi Source WFP	1,111,987	659,459	59%	407,155	37%	44,749	4%
Lango Source IOM	466,103	2,159	0.4%	-	-	463,944	99.6%
Teso* Source OCHA	142,951	110,000	77%	22,000	15%	5,300	4%
Total	1,721,041	771,618	48%	429,155	24%	513,993	28%

Source: IASC Working Group, November 2007.

IV. CLUSTER RESPONSE

Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

The Amuru District Return, Resettlement and CCCM (RR & CCCM) meeting recommended an inter-agency mission be carried out in order to help local communities minimise criminal activities, build the confidence of the returning population and verify unconfirmed reports of a slight reverse trend in population movement. Agencies working in the area attribute the alleged reversal to families returning to camps following the harvest, drying water sources in some areas and fear of the threat of criminal activities. The Gulu and Amuru RR & CCCM meetings have agreed that the district authorities should lead the production of terms of reference (TORs) for the cluster and guidelines for camp phase-out, as well as initiate a discussion on the demolition of abandoned huts. To strengthen the districts' role in the cluster, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) will be requested to chair cluster meetings, while greater district participation will be encouraged.

In Lira District, construction of huts for extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs) in Otuke county continued, with 80 huts now completed. The goal is to build 100 huts and latrines for EVIs in their villages of origin.

Early Recovery

In Teso, the cluster developed a 2008 work plan during a workshop held in December.

In Lira, the cluster has continued to form beneficiary groups in Lira and Dokolo within the scope of its livelihoods project. Across participating parishes, the following participating groups have been identified: 15 community associations comprising all participating beneficiaries (one per parish); 45 youth income generating activities (IGA) groups of 20 members each (one per village); 30 bee-keeping groups (2 per parish) of 30 members each; 45 civic work groups (one per village) of 22 members each; and 45 farmers groups (one per village) of 40 members each. Ninety group leaders have been trained in each sub-county.

Education

Support continues to be needed for schools returning to their locations prior to displacement. In addition to clearance of school compounds, receipt of a benchmark education package, consisting of classroom blocks, desks, latrines, water points, scholastic materials and at least three teachers' houses, are recommended. Many schools that have already returned lack permanent structures, while pupil: teacher ratios remain very high.

In Amuru District, there is a need for an additional 259 classrooms, 245 teachers' houses and 900 latrine stances, while in Gulu such gaps include 1,295 teachers' houses. In Lira district, where nearly all schools have returned, there is an urgent need for an additional 77 classrooms.

While the return of primary schools has been the focus of activities, the gradual return of secondary schools is also being advocated.

In Kitgum District, about 200 PLE candidates did not sit for the exams held in November 2007. A preliminary assessment of the causes of drop-outs indicated reasons ranging from pregnancy to the need to work in the family garden, separation due to population movement and pupils joining ASTUs or Local Defence Units (LDUs). The District Education Office is addressing measures to mitigate future drop-outs.

Concern over drop-out rates has also been expressed in Lira District, where current Primary 6 enrolment is 16,000, yet less than half are likely to register for examinations according to the pattern of previous years.

Also in Kitgum, five primary schools located in return sites have been earmarked to receive Ministry of Education funds for rehabilitation, namely the schools at Ayuu Alali, Paraceli, Mulago, Aguu and Aloto.

Food Security

During the period, much of the population engaged in the harvesting of second season crops and gradual preparation of the land for the first cropping season of 2008.

In Gulu and Amuru, the Food Security cluster carried out an Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) from 17 to 23 December, to assess ongoing food aid needs for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and assess requirements for non-food assistance. A formal arrangement has been established to look at providing food aid to HIV/AIDS-affected persons.

Remaining cycle 12 food rations were distributed in Pader. As at the end of December, a total 240,772 people living in 47,772 households had been covered.

The initial findings of a joint food security assessment in Katakwi District indicated that more than 66 per cent of households would run out of food by January 2008, while another 17 per cent would have no food stocks remaining by February 2008. Distribution of seeds for staple food crops such as cassava, sweet potato, sorghum and groundnuts is low.

Meanwhile, the initial results of the Crop and Food Supply Assessment (CFSA) in Lira indicated a drop in the number of beneficiaries from December 2007 to July 2008: 84,000 beneficiaries were identified, rather than the current 135,000.

Also in Lira, termites posed a challenge to cassava multiplication schemes; although a mid-season evaluation indicated good crop performance for groundnuts and sunflowers and a moderate performance for tomatoes, onions and green grams.

Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS

Given the outbreak of Ebola, as well as ongoing outbreaks of cholera and meningitis, among other infectious diseases, health and epidemic preparedness officials remained on high alert in districts across Uganda.

The outbreak of Hepatitis E in Kitgum remains uncontained and has thus far affected three settlements, including the IDP camps Madi Opei and Potika, as well as Wang-Lango transit site in Madi Opei sub-county. Total reported cases as of 31 December stood at 104, with five deaths, mainly among pregnant mothers. An accelerated intervention plan has been developed and will be implemented, with a critical focus on improving household hygiene and sanitation. Active disease surveillance is being maintained through daily reporting at health facilities, with a rapid response team on standby to investigate reports of suspected cases and immediately conduct disinfection in the affected homes, conduct active case search in nearby communities and conduct tracing on contacts. Social mobilization activities to facilitate early case detection and reporting and to promote general precautionary measures continued throughout the outbreak.

The earlier measles outbreak in the districts of Kumi and Bukedea was contained, with the accelerated routine immunization campaign completed on 7 December. The campaign covered 99 per cent of the target population in Bukedea District, and 80 per cent in Kumi District. As of mid-December, a total of 42 cases, with one death, had been recorded in Kumi, while nine cases (no deaths) had been recorded in Bukedea. No cases of measles were confirmed in Sironko, Manafwa or Bukwo districts.

In the Teso sub-region, mobile clinics reached some 7,864 patients outside a five kilometre radius from a health facility, while training of village health teams (VHTs) started in Bukedea District.

Staff absenteeism continues to be a critical problem across northern Uganda. A newly completed recruitment process is expected to increase health staffing from the current 34 per cent to 70 per cent, while in Gulu, the number of district health posts filled remains at 24 per cent. Provision of staff accommodation and poor drug re-supply from the National Medical Stores are also common constraints.

Protection

In Gulu and Amuru districts, the cluster continued its advocacy for increased presence of special police constables (SPCs) in return areas. Some 90 SPCs were trained in three sub-counties of Gulu District to raise awareness on police roles and responsibilities, gender based violence (GBV) and other human rights issues. Meanwhile, the GBV sub-cluster trained 60 persons from Paicho, Bardege and Lakwana sub-counties as a rapid reaction team to compliment the handling of incidents of abuse in their communities.

In Kitgum, the total number of SPCs deployed in Kitgum has risen to 392, for an average of 22 per sub-county. Over the past 1.5 months, the Police Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) has conducted sensitization programmes in schools in Kitgum Town Council, in which all teachers have been involved. Support is being offered to roll the sensitization programme out in other sub-counties. Child neglect has become an issue of concern as increased instances of family separation due to parents moving to villages of origin while children remain in camps to access services are recorded.

In Pader, an increase in GBV cases (mainly domestic violence) was reported in southern parts of the district, with drug and alcohol abuse cited as the major contributing factors. Also in Pader, concern has been raised by allegations that ASTUs have been involved in sexual exploitation of underage girls and property theft. A joint delegation has been formed to take up the issue with the District Police Commissioner.

In Lira, incidents of domestic violence and GBV continue to be reported, while awareness of court procedures remains low, particularly in rural areas. The Child Protection Committee in Lira conducted reproductive health and hygiene sessions with 62 girl mothers to reduce further pregnancy and infection. Counselling and guidance was provided to child-headed households.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

As the dry season progresses, shallow wells and other water sources are reportedly drying up, leading to crowding at working water points.

Concern has been raised by various districts over their ability to maintain motorised boreholes following handover from humanitarian partners. For one, the increasing cost of fuel has overshot planned budgets. Transformation of fuel-powered generators to run on solar power is recommended. Kitgum District has recommended that motorised systems in particularly remote locations be dismantled and transformed to hand pumps. The district has also called for greater involvement of district water authorities in the supervision and monitoring of water projects.

In Gulu and Amuru, a recent assessment revealed that half of current WASH facilities are located within camps. Many of these facilities will be made redundant by large-scale population return, while coverage will drop in the return areas as larger populations increase pressure on inadequate existing structures. Urgent interventions are required to increase WASH facilities in return areas.

Access to safe drinking water also remains a challenge in return areas in Pader. Most return areas fall below national standards in access to safe water, while some sites have no boreholes at all. While the national standard is one borehole for every 300 people within a radius of 1.5 kilometres, in Pader, some areas have more than 300 people accessing the same borehole. For instance, in Oguta, an estimated 4,820 people have access to two boreholes.

The WASH cluster identified 250 community water sources requiring disinfection and repair across the Teso, Bugisu and Sebei sub-regions: 59 locations in Sironko, Kumi and Katakwi districts have already been covered. The final distribution of household safe water kits, provided for under the Floods Response, began in December, with the distribution of nearly 6,000 kits. An additional 10,000 kits will be distributed in January.

V. SPECIAL FOCUS ISSUES

LRA Consultations in Northern Uganda

The LRA delegation concluded more than five weeks of consultations on Agenda Items 2 and 3 (Durable Solutions and Accountability and Reconciliation) of the Juba Peace Process on 18 December. The LRA were next expected to hold a congress of some 500 delegates at the South Sudan assembly point at Ri-Kwangba in the first weeks of 2008. Meeting with the LRA on the day of their departure, President Museveni extended the previous deadline for a final conclusion to the talks until 31 January 2008, retaining the threat of military action against the LRA if the new deadline expired without an agreement. However, the President also offered to request the

Security Council to suspend the indictments on top LRA leaders for one year and to revisit the 31 January deadline if the talks resumed in Juba by 10 January.

Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever Outbreak

As of 31 December 2007, a total of 144 cases of Ebola, with 37 deaths, had been reported, resulting in a case fatality rate (CFR) of 25.8 per cent. (Ebola's CFR is normally) Throughout the outbreak, all cases of Ebola remained contained to the five sub-counties of Bundibugyo District. Contact tracing was ongoing at the end of December, with a total number of 667 identified contacts. Tracing of 362 of those contacts had been completed as of 30 December. In the absence of new cases, follow-up was expected to conclude on 18 January 2008.

Note: On 15 January, the National Ebola Task Force's Situation Report stated that, in the absence of any new case since 3 January, the outbreak was considered to be contained. As of 15 January, there had been a total of 149 reported cases, of which 37 were confirmed in the laboratory. Of the 149 total cases, 37 proved fatal.

Kenyan Refugees in Uganda

Following the violence that erupted in the wake of the 27 December 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections in Kenya, several thousand Kenyans from the country's western districts, primarily members of the Kikuyu tribe, sought shelter across the border in Uganda. The major crossing points into Uganda were at Malaba in Tororo District, Busia in Busia District, at Lwakhakha in Manafwa District. Unconfirmed numbers of refugees have also been reported in Bukwo, Bududa and Kapchorwa districts. As at the end of December, the exact number of Kenyans in Uganda remained unclear, but members of the humanitarian community were gearing up to provide assistance in support of the joint effort by the Uganda Red Cross Society and authorities in the affected districts. More complete and up-to-date information is provided in the OCHA Situation Reports on the Kenyan Refugees in Uganda, which can be accessed on ReliefWeb, at www.reliefweb.int.

VI. FUNDING

Launch of the 2008 Consolidated Appeal for Uganda

The joint launch of the 2008 Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for Uganda and commemoration of the International Day of Human Rights was held on 10 December 2007. The launch featured a presentation of the CAP 2008 by OCHA, remarks by the Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Deputy Ambassador of Norway and the Humanitarian Coordinator, and a keynote speech by the Uganda Minister for Relief and Disaster Preparedness. Before and after the formal event, a photo exhibition and cluster fair featuring booths with informational material and demonstrations were organized.

To support humanitarian action across northern and northeastern Uganda, assistance to refugees, disaster preparedness and rapid response in the case of sudden onset disasters, the humanitarian community has requested a total of \$374 million across the seven clusters and three sectors (Coordination, Multisector (Refugees) and Emergency Non Food Items).

By the end of the year, the \$349 million 2007 CAP for Uganda was funded at 80 per cent, having received nearly \$279 million in commitments. As in previous years, Uganda ranked among the best performing CAPs.

Appeal Year	Original Requirements (US\$)	Revised Requirements (US\$)	Funding Committed (US\$)	Funding as Percentage of Requirements
2004	127,901,055	142,880,013	112,291,217	79%
2005	157,686,167	188,777,892	146,212,606	77%
2006	222,603,257	263,446,401	225,797,654	86%
2007	295,931,121	348,825,033	278,859,751	80%

VII. THE MONTH AHEAD

OCHA will hold the annual kick-off event for the Consolidated Appeals 2008 on 23 January in Geneva. The kick-off provides the first opportunity for donors to indicate their funding intentions for the year 2008, following approximately one month on from the global launch of the Humanitarian Appeal 2008.