

### I. HIGHLIGHTS

- **NEARLY 11,500 PEOPLE IN ABIM DISTRICT HAVE RELOCATED TO NEW SETTLEMENTS IN 2009 DUE TO INCREASED SECURITY**
- **VIOLENT STORMS DAMAGE HOUSES, CROPS, SCHOOLS AND A HEALTH CENTRE ACROSS ACHOLI REGION AS RAINY SEASON BEGINS**
- **WFP TO INCREASE RATIONS SIZE IN KARAMOJA AS FOOD INSECURITY INCREASES**
- **FIRST ROUND OF POLIO VACCINATIONS COMPLETED, REACHING ABOVE 100% OF TARGETED POPULATION ON AVERAGE**

### II. SECURITY AND ACCESS

#### SECURITY

The security situation in northern Uganda continued to be stable throughout the reporting period. The Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) have deployed additional troops at the country's borders with South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) to pre-empt any possible re-entry into Uganda of elements of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) whose main bases in the DR Congo were destroyed in the recently concluded Operation Lightning Thunder. The UPDF is also patrolling transit sites and return areas in Kitgum District, particularly in Palabek Ogili, where the community has expressed anxiety in the wake of reported LRA activity in southern Sudan.

In contrast, the security situation in Karamoja deteriorated during the month. Attacks and attempted raids on protected kraals reportedly occurred on a near daily basis, particularly in Kapedo, Kalapata and Kaabong Rural in Kaabong District and Kacheri in Kotido District. Suspected armed elements also reportedly shot dead two local security officers, with one of the incidents involving a road ambush in Loyoro sub-county in Kaabong. According to the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), at least 22 deaths were recorded in the sub-region during March. No attacks targeted at the humanitarian community were reported.

#### Access

Humanitarian access remains largely unhindered in northern Uganda, but growing land disputes threaten to adversely affect access to villages of origin by returning IDPs. In Pader, for instance, violent land conflicts broke out between rival factions in Laguti, Lukole, Rackoko, Puranga and Patongo, with one death reported in Puranga. While district land boards are involved in mediating these conflicts, they have indicated that the problem is compounded by poor or lack of information on land laws and referral pathways amongst members of the community. Gulu District is presently considering enacting an ordinance on the Land Act.

### III. POPULATION MOVEMENT

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	88,000	43%	70,000	34%	46,000	23%
	Gulu	257,000	61,000	24%	20,000	8%	176,000	68%
	Kitgum	310,000	102,000	33%	62,000	20%	154,000	50%
	Pader	339,000	78,000	23%	128,000	38%	162,000	48%
	<b>Acholi Total</b>	<b>1,110,000</b>	<b>329,000</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>280,000</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>538,000</b>	<b>48%</b>
Teso	Amuria	72,000	9,000	13%	3,000	4%	60,000	83%
	Katakwi	71,000	7,000	10%	-	-	55,000	77%
	<b>Teso Total</b>	<b>143,000</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>115,000</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Grand Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1,253,000</b>	<b>345,000</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>283,000</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>653,000</b>	<b>52%</b>	

Source: UNHCR, February 2009<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the population figures included in the table, the grand total of population in villages of origin includes the 466,100 returnees in villages of origin in Lango sub-region, where the return process was deemed to have concluded by April 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Following the protection cluster's decision to move to quarterly reporting on population movement, the next update of the population movement figures is expected to be published by UNHCR at the end of April 2009.

In Karamoja, population movements away from the foothills in Abim District to new settlement sites are ongoing. An estimated 11,692 people have relocated to seven new sites, 98 per cent of whom made the move in the first three months of 2009. The new sites include: Katimangor and Tyenopobo in Alerek sub-county, Aremboula in Abim sub-county, Koblin in Nyakwae sub-county, and Pamo, Barlyec and Omoo in Lotukei sub-county. The relocating populations cite several reasons for the movement, including population pressures in the foothills, the need to access more fertile land for cultivation, and the opportunity to access basic social services.

An influx of Congolese women and children into Kotido District from neighbouring northern Uganda and from as far away as western Uganda has also been reported. At least 120 of the women have so far been registered in preparation for repatriation.

## IV. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

### EDUCATION

With the onset of the rains in northern Uganda, concern is growing at the vulnerability of schools to the destructive impact of extreme weather associated with the season. Toward the end of reporting period, two schools – Yepa Primary School and YY Okot Memorial Secondary School in Kitgum District– suffered loss or damage to a total of seven classroom roofs during hailstorms. Also affected were a dormitory and two teachers' houses. While some sector partners have responded by providing roofing materials, more assistance in repairing the damaged structures is urgently needed. A storm also caused damage to structures in six primary schools and one technical college in Atiak sub-county, Amuru District, with the District Education Office estimating that it will cost about US\$ 50,000 to repair the walls, roofs and furniture in the affected institutions. In Pader, two primary schools in Atanga sub-county incurred damage to classrooms following heavy rain and strong winds: Ogom Primary School requires at least ten iron sheets to roof a classroom block and a collapsed two-classroom block needs rehabilitation; and half of the roof of a three-classroom block at Rwot Awich Primary School was blown away in the storm, requiring replacement. The rains are also expected to disrupt learning in the 40 schools in Pader that have no infrastructure whatsoever.

Ambitious new three-year targets for the education sector in Karamoja have been agreed by all five districts of the region, and are captured in the Karamoja Child Declaration. Among others, the targets include: increasing primary school enrolment from the 13 to 70 per cent for girls and from 25 to 60 per cent for boys; reducing the primary school dropout rate from 70 to 20 per cent; improving the pupil-to-teacher ratio from 80:1 to 45:1, and the pupil-to-classroom ratio from 80:1 to 50:1.

### FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS

Beyond the destruction of school and health infrastructure, the storm in Amuru District also killed 192 goats and 830 poultry, in addition to destroying an estimated 100 acres in six parishes of Atiak sub-county, with cassava fields worst affected. In response, the Office of the Prime Minister distributed 84 bags of maize flour and 43 bags of beans, while the office of the district's Chief Administrative Officer is planning to circulate a formal request to specific partners for support for the affected population.

In Kitgum, 13,885 households accessed agricultural inputs through seed fairs and direct distributions in the most food insecure sub-counties of Orom, Omiya Anyima, Namukora, Madi Opei and Agoro sub-counties. Meanwhile, the cluster has developed a contingency plan that attempts to map all known hazards to food security in the district over the last ten years.

In Gulu, a strain of the Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) has been reported at multiplication sites, prompting the National Crops Resources Research Institute (NACRRI) to despatch a team to conduct clean up exercises. In Karamoja, preliminary findings from a joint assessment of a reported outbreak of cassava disease in Awach parish of Abim District has ruled out CBSD, but indicated the prevalence of Cassava Green Mite (CGM). Samples have been taken to NACRRI for further analysis.

General Food Distribution (GFD) in Gulu benefitted some 229,416 people in 79 sites, while 969 HIV-positive people in Pabbo, Ajul, Gulu Municipality and Bobi received 9.6MT of food. In Karamoja, GFD ration sizes were to be increased from 53 to 70 per cent at the end of the reporting period in response to growing hunger in the sub-region. Each beneficiary will now receive 9 kilogrammes (kg) of cereals (maize or sorghum), 1.5 kg of pulses (beans or peas), 0.45 kg of vegetable oil, 0.9 kg of Corn Soya Blend (CSB), and 0.15 kg of salt.

No cases of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) were recorded in Pader District during the month, prompting the District Veterinary Officer (DVO) to write to the Commissioner for Livestock Health and Entomology requesting the lifting of the animal quarantine in Agago County. The district, however, remains vulnerable to the threat of *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR), and the DVO is requesting support toward a vaccination programme.

Vaccinations in Karamoja have so far covered 40 per cent of a targeted 2,010,000 shoats for PPR and only 17 per cent of a targeted 1,075,000 cattle for Contagious Bovine Pleuro Pneumonia (CBPP). The low level of CBPP

vaccination to date is partially attributable to the delay in delivery of CBPP vaccines, as well as poor animal conditions, which cause the start of the CBPP vaccination campaign to be postponed until mid-March 2009.

#### **GOVERNANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND LIVELIHOODS (GIL)**

The Amnesty Commission continues to carry out reintegration activities in Kitgum, with 3,655 reporters having received re-insertion packages. The packages comprise a cash component 263,000 Uganda shillings (UGX, US\$ 130), a mattress, blanket, five kg of beans, saucepans, seeds and three hoes. Proposed longer term support to the reporters includes vocational training in carpentry, mechanics, welding, catering and other skills.

Vetting of the first batch of proposals for the US\$ 255,000 Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) has finally been completed in Gulu and Amuru. The vetting committee has recommended 21 of 42 assessed projects for funding, subject to the final approval of the district QIPs management committee.

#### **HEALTH, NUTRITION AND HIV/AIDS**

Atiak Health Centre IV in Amuru District suffered the most damage from the storm that hit Atiak sub-county on 21 March. The storm blew off the roofs of the out-patient department and the central drug stores, leaving stocked drugs damaged or exposed. Other damages included collapsed walls at the in-patient department, as well as damaged solar panels, water tanks and four rain water harvesting tanks.

Following confirmation of the wild polio virus outbreak in Amuru District, mass supplementary immunization was completed in the district, attaining coverage of 150 per cent. As of the end of March, six cumulative cases of Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP), which is often associated with polio, have been notified, in addition to the one confirmed case of wild polio virus type 1. First rounds of supplementary immunizations were also launched in neighbouring districts, with 104 per cent and 105 per cent overall coverage achieved in Kitgum and Pader respectively. However, two sub-counties in Pader – Pajule and Acholibur – attained only 81 per cent coverage, while Kitgum Town Council, Amida, Layamo and Namokora sub-counties in Kitgum District fell short of the minimum target of 80 per cent coverage. The major constraint to the success of the campaign in Kitgum was incomplete registration of children under five years of age by the Local Councillors owing, largely, to the limited two-day timeframe for the exercise.

Hepatitis E Virus (HEV) remains uncontained in northern Uganda, eighteen months after the initial outbreak. In Kitgum, where the first cases were reported in October 2007, a cumulative 9,721 cases and 151 fatalities had been recorded by the end of the reporting period. The number of new cases has increased thirteen-fold from the previous month, translating into a weekly average of 50 new cases in March. In Pader, where on average six people were reported to be infected each week during the month, 154 cases and seven deaths have been registered since May 2008. Health partners are warning that the epidemic trend is likely to rise further with the onset of seasonal rains.

In Karamoja, over 2,000 children have been screened for severe malnutrition since January, 11 per cent of whom were admitted for treatment. However, challenges to effective response and treatment remain, resulting mainly from lack of community sensitization and involvement in screening.

#### **PROTECTION**

Camp phase-out activities continued in northern Uganda during the month. In Kitgum the activities were conducted in Padibe East, Padibe West, and Labuje/Layamo camps, where a total of 548 huts were demolished and 53 latrines and 30 garbage pits filled. In Pader, camp phase-out was officially launched in Omot sub-county and in Kalongo Town Council. The district's camp phase-out working group has developed strategic priorities for 2009, recognizing, among others: the need for the creation of phase-out committees at the sub-county and parish levels; advocacy for the promulgation of an ordinance on the implementation of the Uganda Land Act; the development and dissemination to the community of clear information packages on land issues; transitioning camp administration to the Local Council system; and advocacy for government ownership and responsibility in return monitoring and camp phase out activities.

In Gulu, recommendations from a joint assessment of the six camps that piloted phase-out activities were adopted by the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) and decommissioning of those camps awaits the final approval of the District Executive Council. An assessment of ten additional camps was conducted during the month, the report on which will be presented at the next DDMC meeting in May. However, public pronouncements by political leaders to the effect that there are no more IDP camps, or that all camps should be closed by a certain date, raise serious protection concerns in Gulu, as they complicate efforts to find durable solutions for the displaced. Moreover, such pronouncements are often taken as cues by landowners to begin evicting remaining IDPs, most of whom are people with special needs (PSNs) or extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs), as reports from Gulu suggest. The protection cluster in Gulu has, consequently, raised its concerns with the DDMC, pointing out that while phase-out activities are ongoing, no camps have yet been officially decommissioned.

Fire outbreaks, particularly in Agoro sub-county, accounted for half of all reported protection cases in Kitgum District in March. While some of the outbreaks have been attributed to negligence, the majority are of mysterious origin, occurring mostly in the night. The Sub-county Security Committee has imposed a curfew on movement from 22:00

hours, on the suspicion that arsonists are to blame. In Pader, 35 people have been forced to occupy huts vacated by returned IDPs at a Pajule settlement after fire gutted their houses and destroyed household assets.

**Human Rights and Rule of Law:** Long pre-trial detention remains of concern in all three districts of north Karamoja (Abim, Kaabong and Kotido), as is the death of suspects in police detention, particularly in Kotido. During the month, a case in which a detainee died while in custody at Kotido Central Police Station was reported.

**Mine Action:** Since January 2009, the Uganda Mine Action Centre (UMAC) has destroyed several pieces of unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Kitgum District, including 13 rocket propelled grenade shells, 20 hand grenades and 17 mortars, in addition to clearing 35 suspected hazardous areas. Fourteen other areas have been identified, two of which are confirmed mine fields – Lumuaka in Agoro sub-county and Ngomoromo in Lokung sub-county, with the latter designated as top priority. In Pader, there is concern that Mine Risk Education (MRE) activities can only be undertaken in two sub-counties – Wol and Parabongo – owing to inadequate funding for agencies working in the area. While both sub-counties have been prioritized following recent UXO accidents there, the district has several reported cases in other parts that also require attention. In Gulu and Amuru, UMAC cleared a total of 7,580 square metres during March, destroying some 301 UXOs and 381 rounds of small arms ammunition.

**Gender Based Violence:** Access to clinical services by survivors of gender based violence (GBV) in Pader remains problematic in the absence of Government doctors, the last of whom left on study leave in September 2008. While survivors can be treated at the privately-owned hospital in Kalongo, they would have to pay between 15,000 UGX (US\$ 7) for adults and 7,000 UGX for children - amounts beyond the reach of many in the district. Significantly, evidence from such hospitals is usually inadmissible in legal proceedings, as the courts prefer the opinion and findings of Government doctors in handling evidentiary issues in GBV cases. Meanwhile, the sub-cluster has developed a standard operating procedure as part of its transition strategy. The document clarifies procedures, roles and responsibilities for actors involved in GBV intervention, in addition to outlining the coordination mechanism necessary to ensure comprehensive prevention and response.

In Gulu and Amuru, an assessment at the parish level found that owing to the ongoing return process and the attendant challenges in accessing police, health and legal services, many GBV survivors are reporting cases to the Local Councillor Is (LCIs). Since LCIs have not been systematically targeted in previous GBV training programmes for local leaders, the findings underscore the need for their inclusion in future trainings, as well as for stronger interventions at the parish level.

In north Karamoja, the fight against GBV is constrained by the absence of organisations implementing GBV prevention or response activities. In the region's southern districts, on the other hand, the lack of first line treatment constitutes the major challenge; both Matany and Moroto hospitals, for instance, lack post-exposure prophylactic (PEP) kits.

#### **WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)**

Improving water safety for at least 75 per cent of households in Kitgum District is a key objective of the ongoing chlorine distribution activities. Similar distributions are expected to cover 11 out of 18 sub-counties in Pader district. Additionally, cluster partners in both districts are facilitating the construction or rehabilitation of a total of 153 boreholes: 78 in Kitgum, which, once completed by the end of April 2009, are projected to serve a population of more than 23,400 people and increase the district's water coverage from the current 64 per cent to 70 per cent, and 75 in Pader, targeting a population of over 25,200 people and aimed at improving safe water coverage to 75 per cent from the prevailing 68 per cent.

Meanwhile, a Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) assessment conducted by the Gulu District Water Office during the reporting period, revealed that all 14 return sites visited lacked safe water sources.

In Karamoja, the severe dry spell has led to a drop in the water table and consequently aggravated access to water for both humans and animals. On average, livestock from protected kraals have to walk at least 18 kilometres to access water.

## **V. SPECIAL FOCUS ISSUES**

### **JOINT OPERATIONS AGAINST THE LRA**

Ugandan troops began to withdraw from the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 15 March 2009, three months into a joint operation against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Garamba National Park. According to military officials, Operation Lightning Thunder resulted in the death of 98 LRA fighters and the capture of 14 of its commanders, including the group's fourth-in-command, Thomas Kwoyelo. A total of 195 abductees – mostly Congolese – were also reportedly rescued. However, the operation failed to achieve the core objective of capturing LRA leader, Joseph Kony, or pressuring him into signing the final peace agreement negotiated at Juba, South Sudan last year. The Ugandan Government has indicated that Congolese forces will continue the hunt for Kony, whose whereabouts remain unknown. Following the Ugandan troops' pullout, the United Nations Special Envoy for LRA-Affected Areas, Joachim Chissano, signalled his intention to initiate contact with Kony, while the LRA's chief negotiator at the Juba peace talks,

David Matsanga, called for a stakeholder's meeting in Tanzania. The Government maintains that it will not re-open negotiations with the LRA, and that the only outstanding issue regarding the peace process is Kony's signature on the final agreement.

## VI. FUNDING

As of the end of March, funding of the US\$ 225 million Consolidated Appeal for Uganda in 2009 remained at US\$ 2.9 million, or 1 per cent of requested funds. The low level of funding at the close of the first quarter is a source of growing concern for humanitarian actors, particularly as there are already reports of NGOs having to close planned programmes due to lack of funding.

## VII. THE MONTH AHEAD

### MONTHLY CLUSTER MEETING SCHEDULE

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Week 1</b>	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	
<b>Week 2</b>	Heads of Cluster 11.15 at OCHA		IASC in Uganda 10.00 at OCHA		
<b>Week 3</b>	Protection Cluster 14.30 at UNHCR		Contact Group** 14.30 at OCHA		
<b>Week 4</b>					

\* 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 second-to-last Wednesday of each month

## VIII. CONTACTS

**For more information, please contact:**

### In Uganda

Kristen Knutson, Public Information and Donor Liaison Officer: +256 312 244 888, +256 772 759 996 (mobile), knutson@un.org;

Denis Okello, National Information Officer: +256 312 244 840, +256 772 749 857 (mobile), okellod@un.org;

### In New York

Chris Hyslop, Desk Officer: +1 917 367 9457, +1 917 640 5592, hyslopc@un.org;

Stephanie Bunker, Public Information Officer: +1 917 367 5126, +1 917 892 1679 (mobile), bunker@un.org;

### In Geneva

Elisabeth Byrs, Public Information Officer, OCHA-Geneva: +41 22 917 2653, byrs@un.org.