

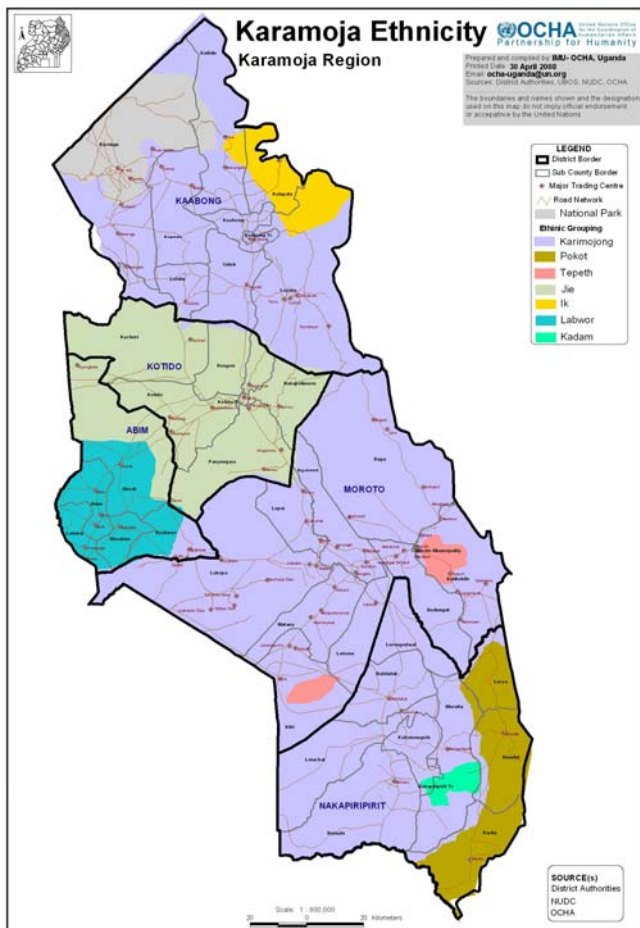


SITUATION REPORT No.1: FOCUS ON KARAMOJA
1 JANUARY – 30 APRIL 2008

HIGHLIGHTS

- **GOVERNMENT LAUNCH OF KARAMOJA INTEGRATED DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (KIDDP)**
- **OVER 300,000 KARIMOJONG RECEIVED FOOD ASSISTANCE BETWEEN 1 FEBRUARY AND 3 MAY**
- **SECURITY INCIDENTS IN MARCH REACHED SIX-MONTH HIGH; UPDF CONDUCTED 38 DISARMAMENT OPERATIONS SINCE BEGINNING OF 2008**
- **HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY CONCERNED BY FORCED REMOVAL OF 101 UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN FROM STREETS OF KAMPALA**

The information contained in this report has been gathered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) from sources including the Government of Uganda, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as academic publications based on first-hand field research such as that undertaken by the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University.



Ethnic Groupings	
 Karimojong	 Ik
 Pokot	 Labwor
 Tepeth	 Kadam
 Jie	

Situation Overview

Situated in north-eastern Uganda in the triangle between south Sudan and Kenya, Karamoja is a semi-arid and agro-pastoralist region of the country comprising the five districts of Abim, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripit.

Estimated at just over 1.1 million, the population of Karamoja is classified into two main ethnic groups: the Karimojong and the Jie. There are also sizeable populations of Pokot and Labwor in eastern and western Karamoja respectively and small more marginalised groups such as the Ik in Kaabong and the Tepeth in Moroto. Firm population figures are hard to come by; the birth and death registration systems in the region are not well implemented, while out-migration of the Karimojong to neighbouring districts in the Teso sub-region and urban areas of Uganda, such as Jinja, Iganga, Entebbe and Kampala increases during lean times.

Most of the population of Karamoja subsists through agro-pastoral or strictly pastoral livelihoods; few Karimojong have livelihoods that are not linked to the pastoral tradition. In agro-pastoral areas, the lack of irrigation means the population is dependent on wet-season cultivation and semi-nomadic pastoralism. Unlike many other areas of Uganda, Karamoja has only one cropping season, which is normally between April and September. In semi-arid and arid regions, pastoralism is the only viable livelihood option at present.

The increasing impact of climate change is visible in Karamoja. Whereas in the 1980s and early 1990s the severe drought cycle was every 10 years, at present droughts are coming every two to three years, while 2006 and 2007 saw back-to-back years of extended

dry spells. Food security, already imperilled by the lack of rain, was further worsened in the second half of 2007 by the subsequent unusually heavy rains, which damaged many crops in the areas of agricultural production (where the rainfall was heaviest) and outbreaks of honeydew and smart crop diseases which decimated sorghum and millet harvests. Since March 2007, there has been an outbreak of PPR (“goat plague”) disease¹ - a trans-boundary outbreak that originated in Turkana (Kenya) in January 2006. In Moroto District, it is estimated that up to 40 per cent of all goats may have succumbed to this livestock disease since March 2007.

A dual settlement system of manyattas (or semi-permanent homesteads) and kraals (mobile or semi-mobile livestock camps) has traditionally allowed for the mitigation of vulnerability. However, traditional seasonal migratory patterns have been curtailed by the hardening of Karamoja’s borders both internally and externally, while insecurity has strained relationships between ethnic groups within and adjacent to the Karamoja region.

Development & Disarmament

The insecurity prevalent in Karamoja is an outgrowth of many factors, including easy access to illegal small arms, the breakdown of traditional leadership structures and related increase of unsanctioned, commercially-motivated cattle raiding and impunity for criminal acts due to the absence of the rule of law. Nor is the insecurity restricted to Uganda; cross-border raiding is frequent and the international arms trade remains unconstrained.

Since 2001, the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) has been pursuing concerted disarmament operations in the Karamoja region. Initially based on voluntary disarmament, the UPDF campaign began in 2006 to use excessive force at times in carrying out disarmament, particularly during *cordon-and-search* operations.

On 18 April 2008, the Government of Uganda formally launched the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP) at ceremony in Moroto District. While applauding the participatory approach adopted by the Government in developing the KIDDP, the humanitarian and human rights community remains concerned about the means by which the UPDF disarmament strategy is being pursued and will continue to monitor the situation accordingly.

While the KIDDP is also an elaboration of the Karamoja region’s particular development needs within the wider Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for Northern Uganda, its successful

¹ PPR: *peste de petits ruminants*, or “small ruminants pest” is an acute or sub-acute viral disease afflicting goats and sheep and characterized by fever, erosive stomatitis, conjunctivitis, gastroenteritis, and pneumonia. Goats are usually more severely affected than sheep. (Source: USAUA Gray Book 1998)

implementation is largely dependent on restoring the rule of law in the region. Development and justice must be made available at the same time as voluntary disarmament is pursued in order to ensure the sustainability of the process.

The limited reach of state authority and basic services leaves the region without effective rule of law and a civilian judicial system, without access to appropriate primary and secondary education and without access to health care, clean drinking water and basic sanitation. In the absence of these basic services, sustainable development is practically unachievable.

Yet, without development and security, disarmament will remain untenable. Disarmed populations left vulnerable to the predations of still-armed neighbours will continue to seek to rearm themselves so long as effective rule of law and policing institutions are absent. Non-violent disarmament has proved in the past to be more effective in Karamoja than forced disarmament. Support for development and the creation of a secure environment is a necessary precursor to voluntary disarmament. The issues cannot be separated.

At the current rate of progress, Karamoja will not attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. While fully supporting the Government’s objective in providing a strong push toward attainment of national standards for economic growth and development through the PRDP and regional programmes, the situation in Karamoja requires longer-term, sustained and concerted efforts. Attainment of the MDGs should be viewed as the point of convergence for a jointly developed programme of targeted humanitarian and development assistance.

Security & Access

A six-month low in insecurity in February was succeeded by a six-month high in the number of aggressive Karimojong activities in March. Some 67 incidents were reported during the month of March, compared to 51 incidents at the previous high in October 2007. As of 29 April, some 34 incidents had been reported since the beginning of the month.

The upsurge in aggression is likely linked to the sustained disarmament operations being conducted by the UPDF: 15 operations reportedly took place in March and 10 in April. During the operations, several hundred individuals were arrested and hundreds of cattle seized. Indeed, the arrests and seizure of cattle signify a new tactic being employed by the UPDF. The cattle are seized and redeemed by Karimojong for guns handed over voluntarily. The Government has also announced that illegally-armed Karimojong who do not surrender their weapons voluntarily would be court-martialled.

In total, since 1 January according to UPDF figures, 40 disarmament operations, resulting in the reported collection of some 970 weapons, have been conducted. The new tactics seem to be in

response to the drop off in the number of guns being collected monthly: in 2007, the UPDF was gathering an estimated 2,000 weapons per month, whereas only a few hundred are estimated to be gathered now each month.

In a positive development, however, no ambushes were reported during the months of March and April. Two road ambushes were reported in February 2008 and three in January 2008, including an ambush on a vehicle that had previously escorted and dropped off staff of the World Food Programme (WFP) in Kaabong. Due to the insecurity and prevalence of ambushes, United Nations ground movements within the Karamoja region are only conducted with armed escorts.

Another source of significant concern continues to be the factor of the protected kraals, of which only eight remain in the region, including four in Kaabong district. Originally established to protect the cattle of disarmed Karimojong, the large number of animals in confined spaces with insufficient access to grazing lands led to a concern over the threat of disease. Some Karimojong also complained they were unable to access their cattle as frequently as wished. At the end of 2007, the UPDF announced the partial abandonment of the protected kraals policy.

Even as the number of protected kraals has been halved, they continue to be used, particularly in Kaabong District, mainly as a result of the UPDF's intensive disarmament programme there. The protected kraals continue to be the target of raids: two raids against protected kraals were reported in January and four in February, including a reported five-hour raid on 17 February, in which 400 to 600 head of cattle were taken.

Population Movement

Over the last two years, as a result of improved security in Moroto, development agencies such as Christian International Peace Service (CHIPS) and Clyde Consultancy/Church of Uganda have used peace and reconciliation interventions to encourage inter-clan re-settlement and more harmonious relations between the Karimojong and the population of neighbouring Teso sub-region. Most of these sites are in Iriiri sub-county, a highly productive area in the "green belt" of Moroto District.

The major resettlement areas include Apeitolim, Nabwal and Lomoratoit in Moroto District and Lokales in Nakapiripirit District. Since October 2007, the population residing at these areas has increased substantially. **By the end of March 2008, the population at Apeitolim had risen four-fold to 4,500, while the population of Nabwal had grown from an estimated 700 in October 2007 to an estimated 7,000 in March 2008.** Additional population movement to these sites is expected in the coming months; current planning estimates are that the population of Apeitolim could rise to as many as 25,000, while that of Nabwal could rise to 19,000

people. Earlier estimates in February 2008 had the number of new arrivals at Lokales in Nakapiripirit District between 8,000 and 10,000; new estimates are now being gathered. The major point of concern on these population movements is the lack of adequate basic services in the re-settlement areas.

Among new arrivals at the resettlement sites are out-migrant Karimojong who have returned, some of whom have been forcefully returned by the Government of Uganda, including unaccompanied children picked up off the streets of urban areas such as Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe.

In an alarming development, the Government of Uganda has recently forcibly removed 101 unaccompanied children and eight adult women, living and working on the streets of Kampala to the Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Centre. Interviews revealed that 80 per cent of the children are from the Karamoja region.

This is not the first time that the Government has taken such action to remove Karimojong from the streets of the capital. And while a joint visit to Kampiringisa by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) ascertained that conditions at the Centre had been improved over the last removal, the humanitarian community continues to advocate with the Government to respect relevant national legislation and policies, including the 2006 Street Children Strategy, in the context of which the humanitarian and human rights community has pledged to provide support for the relocation of unaccompanied street children when carried out with respect for principles of child protection and human rights.

Humanitarian Response

Food Security

Grave concern has been expressed by agencies working in the area of food security and livelihoods in Karamoja over the potential impact of food insecurity in the region stemming from the combined impact of two years' of prolonged dry spells, followed by unusually heavy rains in food surplus-producing areas of the region and the impact of honeydew rot and PPR. A rapid assessment by food security partners revealed that staple foods have disappeared from several markets in Karamoja due to households holding onto their food stocks, limited purchasing power, or 'effective demand', high transport costs for traders, limited supply in normal source areas, such as Katakwi and Amuria (due to the loss of crops in the 2007 floods) and insecurity.

The population has begun to employ limited coping strategies to deal with the threat of food insecurity, while **the average rate of Gross Acute Malnutrition (GAM) for the region has risen to 10.9 per cent** (the emergency threshold is 10 per cent). In Nakapiripirit and Moroto Districts, the GAM rate is at or above 15 per cent.

Visible signs of malnutrition have been recorded among the population in parts of Lokupoi Parish and Nabwal resettlement area of Moroto District. Significantly, the seasonal lull in new admissions to therapeutic feeding centres usually recorded in the November to February period was not observed this year. Moreover, the GAM rates are perceived to be high at an early stage in 2008: normally the current rates would be reached in the pre-harvest lean months of June and July when household food stocks are often low.

Despite long standing food aid programmes, it is highly likely that poor access to health care and clean water are significant contributory factors to the high malnutrition rate. In addition, the separation of men and cows in kraals and women with children in manyattas, accentuated by disarmament operations, could be a further factor reducing women's and children's access to vital proteins.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that more than 700,000 Karimojong may require some degree of food aid through to the next harvest, expected in July 2008. **By the end of March, 91,363 of the most vulnerable Karimojong, assessed to have required immediate assistance, had received food distributions: 65,000 in February and 26,363 in March. As of 3 May, 320,842 people had benefited from 5,272 metric tons (MT) of food since the beginning of the year.**

Furthermore, livestock health remains essential to food security, given the predominance of pastoralist livelihoods in Karamoja. Yet, livestock support programmes remain weak. A great deal of livestock health is virtually privatised and many cattle herders appear to be reluctant to pay for services. The PPR outbreak urgently requires a widespread vaccination programme, but financial support for the programme has not been forthcoming. Animal husbandry remains the most logical livelihood in such semi-arid and arid regions, necessitating the expansion of animal health services, including the recruitment of additional Community Animal Health Workers at the district level, remains essential to livestock survival.

And while partners are playing an important role in livelihood diversification, levels of support fall far short of requirements. In 2008, Karamoja may face an acute shortage of seeds, which would further undermine the region's food security.

Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS

In Karamoja, health indicators are among the worst in the country. The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) and crude mortality rate (CMR) stand at 750 deaths per 100,000 live births and 3.9/10,000/day respectively. The international CMR emergency threshold is 1/10,000/day.

Significantly, ten years ago, Karamoja had an HIV incidence of less than 0.1 per cent of the population. Currently that rate is at 3.4 per cent. This suggests that new HIV infection rates in Karamoja

are among the highest in Uganda. Moreover, only about 8 per cent of HIV/AIDS patients requiring the treatment have access to anti-retroviral therapy (ART).

Regionally, less than 50 per cent of health posts are filled, but that figure also masks the small number of posts that exist. For instance, staffing of health posts is at 56 per cent in Abim, 45 per cent in Kaabong and 51 per cent in Kotido, but all together only eight doctors account for those statistics.

Health conditions are also of grave concern in the new re-settlement areas in Karamoja. In Moroto, health agencies conducted a rapid health assessment of Nabwal resettlement area, finding prevalent malnutrition, inadequate health services, poor shelter, lack of basic food and non-food items and inadequate water facilities. The area has no pit latrines, and there are only two boreholes located three kilometres away for a population of about 7,000, although two more are being constructed. In another coordinated initiative, cholera outbreak preparedness plans are being developed ahead of the oncoming rainy season and drug supplies are being pre-positioned in Moroto in anticipation of a possible meningitis outbreak.

Education

Primary school enrolment rates in Karamoja are well under 50 per cent in most districts, while girl child primary school enrolment is just 35 per cent across the region. Student retention, especially of girl children, is also a major problem. Moreover, there is an acute shortage of education professionals in the region: only 2 per cent of all teachers in Karamoja are graduates. **Literacy rates across the northern districts of Karamoja range from a high of 40 per cent in Abim district to a low of only 6 per cent in Kaabong.** At 12 per cent and 15 per cent respectively, literacy rates in Kotido and Moroto Districts are also well below the national average.²

The expansion of education is critical to secure developmental gains in Karamoja. Specific attention should be given to expansion of the Alternative Basic Education in Karamoja (ABEK) programme, an educational approach that fits into the specific lifestyle of pastoralist children. Agencies have undertaken to increase primary school enrolment in the region by providing scholastic materials to all primary schools and launching an enrolment campaign. Initial reports on the enrolment campaign indicate an increase in enrolment between 60 and 80 per cent.

It can be noted that, where children are enrolled in school (particularly at boarding schools), Karamoja has recorded impressive performances. In the Senior Four examinations at the end of the 2007 school year, all Kotido secondary students who sat the exams passed: 141 students in total. In Moroto, 360 candidates passed their exams, with only one failure. Similarly, only one student failed the exam in Abim District. However, the numbers at secondary school are a tiny

² 2008 Consolidated Appeal for Uganda.

percentage of the overall population of older children who should be at school.

In addition to the need to advocate for higher enrolments in primary and secondary education, the Karamoja region also requires investment in more teachers and school infrastructure. At present, the average teacher to pupil ratio is 1:91 in the northern districts of Karamoja and the average classroom to pupil ratio for the same area is 1:96, whereas the national standard for both is 1:55.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

With only 46 per cent of the population having access to safe drinking water, and less than 10 per cent to sanitation facilities, there is also a pressing need to do more in the area of water, sanitation and hygiene. Across the region's northern districts, very few health facilities have dedicated water sources, impacting on hygiene and waste management. In Abim, for example, only 64.3 per cent of the health facilities have a functional pit latrine, which is shared by patients, the community and health workers. Half of those latrines are reportedly filled up. Access to hand-washing at the household level and in schools is reportedly around two per cent.

Human Rights

Against the backdrop of reported violations of human rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released in November 2006 the first in a series of reports on the impact of the disarmament operations – referred to as *cordon-and-search* operations – on the human rights situation in the sub-region. Subsequent reports have been released in March 2007 and August 2007.

The OHCHR and partners documented a number of disarmament-related human rights violations, including arbitrary or summary executions, excessive use of force, arbitrary arrest and detention and destruction of property that created tensions between the UPDF and local communities. Incursions by illegally-armed Karimojong into neighbouring communities, road ambushes and other criminal acts, as well as the killing

and injuring of UPDF soldiers (in particular during exchange of fire and ambushes) were also reported.

However, in early 2008, the general consensus from both UPDF and Karimojong communities is that their relationship is steadily improving, although isolated incidents of human rights violations and criminal acts continue to be recorded. The UPDF has made efforts to increase dialogue with traditional leaders and local communities.

In particular, the UPDF has instructed its officers not to resort to torture to obtain confessions related to the possession of guns and ammunition by suspects and to avoid excessive use of force, including the use of firearms, during disarmament operations. Cases of alleged torture during arrest and detention, however, continue to be reported and are currently being investigated by the UPDF. Impunity remains a source of concern, although in early 2008 a slight increase in institutional accountability has been observed. UPDF statistics show that since February 2007, 23 soldiers have been placed on remand, while six have been convicted in relation to disarmament operations. The UPDF also reports that 90 alleged armed Karimojong rare on remand, whilst 20 have been convicted.

Protection partners, including local government officials, United Nations and international and national NGOs, from all five districts of Karamoja sub-region met in Moroto on 7 February 2008 and devised a protection strategy to address the specific protection challenges of the sub-region, which has been submitted to the national Protection Cluster for adoption. One key recommendation is the establishment of a regional protection working group for Karamoja under the leadership of the Uganda Human Rights Commission and its Civil-Military Cooperation Centres (CMCC). The first regional meeting took place in Moroto on 2 May 2008.

Human rights workshops and training for members of the CMCCs, UPDF and the Uganda Police Force have been provided as part of joint capacity-building initiatives; further training for UPDF operational forces in the region is planned for May 2008.

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WHO-WHAT-WHERE (3W) MATRIX FOR KARAMOJA

	District	Peace & Reconciliation	Education	Food Security	Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS	Protection	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
K A R A M O J A	Abim	UNDP	UNICEF, WFP	CESVI, FAO, WFP	ADLoG, CUAMM, Malaria Consortium, MOH, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO	OHCHR, UNFPA, UNICEF	
	Kaabong	ADRA, DADO, KDDO, OXFAM, UNDP	ADRA, OXFAM, SCiU, UNICEF, WFP	DADO, FAO, KDDO, NAADS, OXFAM, WFP	COU, CUAMM, IRC, KDDO, KDL0G, MOH, MSF, OXFAM, UNICEF, UNFPA, UPHOLD, WFP, WHO	DADO, KDDO, OHCHR, OXFAM, UNFPA, UNICEF	ADRA, MEDAIR, OXFAM
	Kotido	ADRA, JICAHWA, LYDO, OXFAM, UNDP	ADRA, CARITAS, JET, OXFAM, SCiU, UNICEF, WFP	ADRA, FAO, FIGP, JICAHWA, LYDO, OXFAM, WFP	ADRA, CUAMM, IRC, ISP, JCRC, KDL0G, KtoD, LYDO, Malaria Consortium, MOH, OXFAM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UPHOLD, WFP, WHO	ADRA, CLA, LYDO, OHCHR, OXFAM, UNFPA, UNICEF	ADRA, KDF, LYDO, OXFAM
	Moroto	C&D, IRC, KAAP, KACHEP, MWSL, SCiU, TKL, TOBARI, UNDP, WECOP	C&D, FOC-REV, ISP, KACHEP, SCiU, TKL, UNICEF, WEL0P, WFP	C&D, FAO, FOC-REV, MWSL, VSF, WECOP, WFP	ARELIMOK, C&D, CUAMM, FOC-REV, GL, IRC, KAAP, KATHES, KAWOSEP, MAHAS, Matany Hospital, MDLoG, MMC, Moroto Hospital, MtoD, SCiU, SVI, TKL, UNFPA, UNICEF, UPDF, WECOP, WFP, WHO	C&D, FOC-REV, KAAP, KACHEP, MWSL, OHCHR, SCiU, TOBARI, UNFPA, UNICEF, WECOP	C&D, ISP, KAAP, MWSL, TKL
	Nakapiripirit	CARDO, IRC, PIRDO, SCiU, TKL, UNDP	ACTED, CARDO, FOC-REV, ISP, PIRDO, SCiU, TKL, UNICEF, WFP	ACTED, CARDO, FAO, FOC-REV, Happy Cow, KADP, NCT, POZIDEP, SVI, WFP	COU, CUAMM, FOC-REV, IRC, Malaria Consortium, MOH, NDLoG, Presbyterian Church, SCiU, SVI, UNFPA, UNICEF, UPHOLD, WFP, WHO	FOC-REV, OHCHR, SCiU, UNFPA	ACTED, CARDO, C&D, ISP, PAPD, PCID, POZIDEP