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# IOM UGANDA

## Information Counseling Referral Services (ICRS) Bulletin

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September, 2008 Bulletin

## IOM Uganda's Technical Assistance to the Amnesty Commission

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respective family was conducted, and current photos of the reporter, taken by AC were shared with the family.

In some cases, AC and IOM arranged for the immediate family members to visit the reporters, in the housing facilities where they were receiving counseling, as they prepared for a re-union with their families. In the case of the four reunited reporters, the IOM psychosocial counselors and the respective Amnesty Commission DRT officers, consulted with the Local government and traditional leaders, conducted community counseling, and thereafter arranged for the formal welcome ceremonies, where the reporters were handed over to the families, witnessed by local authorities and community members in the areas of return. The respective AC DRT office and the IOM psychosocial counselors are in contact with these reporters, monitoring their coping up progress within the communities of return. IOM Uganda is fundraising to plug into the reintegration gaps to ensure that the reporters and return communities are facilitated through community based reintegration approaches.

### IOM and AC Support the Traditional Cleansing for Reporters

The purpose of the cleansing ceremony is to welcome and commence the reintegration of the former combatants, supporters and abducted victims, who have been away from home due to abduction by the LRA into their communities. IOM through AC is facilitating these cleansing ceremonies as part of recognizing the roles of the traditional, religious and local leaders and other key partners in the acceptance of returning former combatants, their dependants and above all the acute and critical role that they play in conflict resolution and peace building in the areas of return. So far, one regional cleansing ceremony has been conducted in Gulu district at the Paramount Chief's palace and four cleansing ceremonies have

With the support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), this month IOM continued the ICRS technical assistance to the Amnesty Commission (AC). The assistance aims at enhancing the commission's effectiveness and capacity to fulfill its mandate for the implementation of the Amnesty Act 2000, by ensuring the safe, orderly, voluntary return, and reinsertion of former combatants, supporters and abducted victims of the armed rebellions in Uganda.

### Family Tracing and Reunion of Reporters

As of 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2008, families of 19 new reporters have been traced and four family reunions conducted. These families are in the districts of Apac, Gulu, Kitgum, Lira, Pader, and Soroti. From the bio-data obtained from the reporters upon arrival and during counseling, details about their families were established; the psychosocial counselors reached out to their families and conducted family counseling, to prepare them to receive their daughter or son. Through a speaker phone, the first communication between the reporter and the



taken place at the sub-county levels in Pader and Kitgum in Acholi region in the north; and one in Soroti -Teso region in the Eastern part of Uganda. In the Acholi region, the cleansing ceremony entails the reporter stepping on an egg placed between a reed called *Opobo* and a granary stick. The egg between the reeds symbolizes cleansing the bad omens one might have got while in abduction or rebellion, and the granary stick symbolizes the opening of the food granary for the reporter to share once again with the family.



Reporters undergoing cleansing [IOM Photo]



VSAT Communication device installed at AC-DRT Gulu [IOM photo]

Together with commissioners, the SROs and DRTs received training from the IOM-Uganda facilitated a 3 days training for the AC-SROs in GIS. The SROs received full training in ARCGIS 1, which is a full-featured GIS software for visualizing, creating, managing, and analyzing geographic data. This course provides the foundation for becoming a successful ArcGIS Desktop user. Future intermediary and advanced trainings in ArcGIS will be necessary to enhance the GIS skills of the AC staff to undertake the enormous task of geo mapping more opportunity based referral services for reporters.

**Capacity Building for the AC**

IOM Database and GIS experts are continuously upgrading and cleaning the AC data base. The new features include assistance profiling for every reporter; Referral services mapped by the IOM and AC outreach officers within the reporters’ areas of return; case file management for each individual reporter case history; and a section on queries where various statistics can be obtained instantly.

The database and the supporting infrastructure [computers and VSAT communication devices] have been installed in all the AC-DRTs. AC-Senior Reintegration Officers [SROs] and Demobilization and Reintegration Teams [DRTs] have been trained on how to use the database effectively.

**Update: Distribution of Reinsertion Kits**

As of 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2008, 339 out of the 611 reporters within the USAID funding period of 2006 to 2008, have received their kits in the respective AC-DRT offices. 29 reporters are scheduled to receive their kits from Arua DRT on the 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2008. *Figure 1: Distribution of Reinsertion Kits per DRT*

DRT	Served Beneficiaries
Gulu	187
Kampala	49
Kasese	13
Kitgum	62
Mbale	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>

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