



**The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
in partnership with OXFAM**

**Training on the UN Guiding Principles on
Internal Displacement**

November 2003

Gulu & Kitgum Districts

Uganda

Training on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Gulu & Kitgum, November 2003

Executive Summary

Over 150 displaced camp leaders, representatives of women associations and of local authorities participated in a series of workshops on IDP protection organized by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Oxfam in Gulu and Kitgum, Northern Uganda. These workshops followed the visit of the UN Special Representative on Internal Displacement and of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator to northern Uganda in mid-2003. They also aimed to complement workshops on IDP protection organized by the UN IDP Unit in November 2003, which targeted authorities and humanitarian personnel.

Participants to the trainings deplored that the national government has so far failed to protect them. Their situation has actually worsened over the past year, following the deterioration of the security situation and the subsequent decreased humanitarian access. The rebel group Lord Resistance Army (LRA) was seen by all as the major threat to their physical security.

Despite the terrible situation in which they are today, participants showed an admirable determination to gain knowledge on their rights. They proposed solutions to better define their roles vis-à-vis authorities, and how to organize themselves better. They also said they wished for more training on their rights, if possible jointly with government forces, and on communication channels to address their needs.

Introduction

At the end of November 2003, a series of three trainings were organized by NRC and Oxfam in Gulu and Kitgum to support efforts by the international community to disseminate the rights of IDPs among all relevant actors and to devise ways to improve the protection of the displaced. Workshops in Gulu took place on November 24-25 and November 30-December 1. The workshop in Kitgum was on November 27-28.

In 1999, NRC organized a first training on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in Kampala. This training called for greater attention to the needs of IDPs in Uganda both at the national and at international level, in particular through the dissemination of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. It also pointed out the necessity to better involve IDPs in decisions affecting their lives.

Several initiatives followed this training. In 2002, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) supported the Ugandan government to draft a National Policy on Internal Displacement. The policy's main purpose is to ensure that IDPs enjoy the same rights as other Ugandans. It aims to establish institutions for managing IDP

situations and it specifies responsibilities of government institutions and humanitarian organizations, displaced communities and other stakeholders.

During missions to Uganda in August and October 2003, the UN Special Representative on Internal Displacement, Francis Deng, and the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) both urged the Ugandan government to adopt this policy, which represents an essential tool for the government to better protect and assist the displaced.

In mid-November 2003, OCHA's IDP Unit organized two seminars on IDP rights in Gulu and Kitgum for representatives of authorities at the district level, of the Ugandan army, as well as staff of international and national humanitarian organizations. Participants to the training recommended the adoption of the National Policy on Internal Displacement by the government, as well as its dissemination at all levels.

NRC training in Gulu and in Kitgum the following week aimed to complement the IDP Unit training, by giving IDPs tools to better advocate for their rights, and for local authorities to know the rights of their constituents, and to better define their role vis-à-vis the displaced.

These endeavors come as the situation of internal displacement in Uganda has reached dramatic proportions. As of the end of 2003, there were 1.4 million IDPs in Uganda¹, the majority of them in IDP camps in the northern districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader, compared to 660,000 in July 2002². As of October 2003, over 419,000 were registered in Gulu district, 281,000 in Kitgum and 229,000 in Pader.³ But internal displacement, which has plagued the region home to the Acholi people since 1986, is no longer restricted to the north of the country and now affects twelve districts. This increase coincides with the intensification of the Ugandan army's efforts to eliminate the rebel group LRA, and the subsequent attacks by the LRA against the civilian population. There is limited humanitarian access due to LRA attacks and insufficient protection of the camps.

Violence directly affected participants to the workshops on the Guiding Principles while the trainings were taking place. The camp leader of Palaro, Gulu District, who had planned to attend the workshop the following week, was ambushed and killed by the LRA. During the workshop in Kitgum, the camp leader of Padibe, Kitgum District, informed participants that his camp had been attacked by the LRA during the night and that 21 huts had been burnt.

National authorities have so far failed to a large extent to protect and assist the displaced. At the national level, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the Department for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees are nominally responsible for the internally displaced. At the district level, the District Disaster Management Committee has that responsibility. It has to evaluate the needs of the IDPs and to reports to the OPM, but so far the system has not really been functioning. The international community has until

¹ Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Uganda, 11 November 2003

² UN OCHA, July/August 2002

³ Office of the Prime Minister, *ibid.*

recently paid little attention to Uganda's displacement crisis. We can hope that the recent UN high level visits, training activities and the reinforcement of UN capacity in the north will translate into an improvement of the IDP situation in northern Uganda.

Participants

Over 150 people were trained in Gulu and Kitgum. Participants to the Gulu workshops included IDP camp leaders, representatives of women associations and local authorities at the sub-county level (LC3) from Gulu District, ie 6 camps in Omoro county, 11 camps in Kilak county, 9 in Nwoya county and 7 in Aswa county. Representatives from 5 camps in Kitgum District, and 11 in Pader District, and LC3 attended the Kitgum workshops.

Findings

Participants to all three workshops came to similar conclusions, which are summarized below.

1. *Causes of displacement*

LRA attacks are the primary cause of displacement in Kitgum and Pader. The second cause of displacement is the relocation of people into camps by UPDF forces.

2. *Protection providers and threats*

Humanitarian organizations, authorities, camp leaders, and IDPs themselves provide some protection to the displaced. The LRA was seen as the main threat to IDPs' rights. The UPDF was seen as guaranteeing IDPs' rights in certain cases, but violating them in others. The national government has the primary responsibility to protect IDPs but has so far largely failed to do so. Guiding Principle 6 says that displacement should last no longer than required by circumstances, but people have been displaced for years, without any prospect of return.

3. *Essential needs*

The government has failed to provide proper accommodation and basic services to IDPs. The most essential needs of IDPs in northern Uganda are physical security (due to lootings, sexual violence, abductions,...), food, health (due to lack of water & sanitation, disease, overcrowding) and education. Participants to the Gulu workshop mentioned the need for shelter for night commuters as well.

To illustrate the abysmal health situation in Pader District, a participant mentioned that only two doctors provided care in Patongo, a camp of 80,000 in Agato sub-county.

Regarding the food situation, participants said that while some camps receive monthly rations by WFP/NRC, others benefit from food distribution less than twice a year. Participants to all three workshops showed a clear mistrust in regard to food distribution "volunteers" and wished for volunteers to treat IDPs with respect. Participants to the Kitgum workshop recommended that NRC organize a workshop

on food distribution mechanisms for camp representatives, including women relief focal points, as well as volunteers to increase knowledge and transparency.

4. *Coping mechanisms*

While the clan has traditionally held the Acholi society together, the phenomenon of displacement has disrupted the long-established structures. Some families have fled to different camps, sometimes as a result of previous family conflicts. In Kitgum and Pader, family members have often fled to different camps to maximize their chances to reach safety. Families have also been disrupted following direct attacks on the camps by LRA. In some instances, girls have been hiding not to be taken as “wives” by UPDF soldiers.

5. *Decision making process*

Despite this structural breakdown, information flows from IDPs to administrative and military authorities, as well as to humanitarian organizations is to some extent still functioning, at least in theory. Before the creation of camps, the village leader beat the drum to gather the elders and discuss issues with them. Concerns were generally transmitted to parish chiefs, sub-county chiefs and to district authorities. Since the creation of camps, information has usually been transmitted from the camp leader, to the various local authorities (LCs), and from there to district authorities. Military authorities are sometimes alerted on security issues, and international NGOs on assistance needs. Women are included in the IDP committees, although usually in a lesser number than men. There seems to be a discrepancy between formal reporting mechanisms and reality, where IDPs prefer to bypass the normal hierarchy for more efficient channels. In many cases, there seems to be a lack of communication between IDPs and authorities. In the second Gulu workshop, camp leaders said they brought information to authorities, but that they did not see any result. They also said that because they are not part of the LC system, authorities do not give them credibility. Participants to the Kitgum workshop expressed the need for camp leaders to be able to appoint a representative at the district level to participate in decisions regarding IDPs.

In order to improve exchange of information between IDPs and the army, Public Relations Officers (PRO) should be established in every camp. Soldiers should be stationed around the camps rather than stay in the middle of the camp. They should stop to recruit children. Soldiers with HIV/AIDS should not have the duty to protect camps, especially since many cases of rapes involve soldiers. Their drinking should also be controlled.

6. *Return*

IDPs who want to go back home at the present moment temporarily or permanently should be allowed to do so, instead of being prevented by government forces.

When peace prevails, communities should actively seek whether safe return is indeed possible. Before returning, people should be made aware of their rights to return voluntarily and should be involved in planning their return. For return to be durable,

there is a need for the provision of basic services (water, health,...), reconstruction of houses, churches & mosques, schools, provision of agriculture inputs, domestic animals, income generating activities, etc. Reconciliation activities should also be undertaken.

7. *Capacity building & assistance*

According to camp leaders in the first Gulu workshop, responsibilities of camp leaders and of authorities at the sub-county levels (LC3) should be better defined. The camp leader of Pagak, Gulu District, then proposed the creation of a formal camp leader and women representative association to better sort out issues.

Existing structures, such as camp leaders, LCs and District Manager Committees, should be strengthened through training and financial support. Communication systems should also be provided, for IDPs to find out about security threats. Developing mobile network coverage to the camps was seen as a possible step.

Local leaders and camp officials should monitor IDPs rights through data collection in collaboration with international NGOs. Experience on information sharing and monitoring should be shared among the different camps.

Training on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement should be organized at all levels. IDP communities should be sensitized on their rights, on channels of communication and on how their needs should be addressed. The army needs to be made aware of IDPs rights and their role to protect IDPs. Participants to the Kitgum workshop recommended a joint training between soldiers and IDP leaders to improve IDP protection.

Methodology and facilitation

These three trainings were a joint initiative by NRC's ICLA Project in Gulu and Oxfam in Kitgum. They primarily used the modules developed by the Global IDP Project of the NRC in collaboration with the UN Office for Human Rights (UN HCHR). These modules, which examine key elements to protect IDPs throughout the displacement cycle, from preventing displacement to finding durable solutions for IDPs, have been used in over 30 workshops around the world.

A team of the Global IDP Project in Geneva delivered sessions to explain the origin of the Guiding Principles and the response to internal displacement at the international level, the issue of protection from and during displacement, how to ensure respect for the rights of IDPs, as well as durable solutions for the displaced, such as return or resettlement. A staff member of NRC ICLA Project in Gulu, and of the NGO ACORD in Kitgum presented legal and institutional arrangements responding to internal displacement. (see Agenda, annex 1).

Each workshop lasted for two days and included interactive presentations, group works, as well as role play. Sessions were translated into Luo, and participants received the Guiding Principles in that language as well.

Workshop logistics and funding was provided by NRC ICLA Project in Gulu and Oxfam in Kitgum. Part of the costs for the trainers and material were provided by the Global IDP Project's core budget.

Annex 1- Agenda Gulu & Kitgum

Day One

8:30 – 9:00	Registration of participants
9:00 – 9:30	Opening statement by authorities
9:30 – 10:00	Presentation of agenda and participants (by NRC)
10:00-11:00	Introduction to the Guiding Principles & legal origins (by NRC, Greta Zeender)
11:00-11:15	Coffee Break
11:15-12:30	Legal and institutional arrangements responding to internal displacement in Uganda (by NRC, Alyi Patrick Lalur/ ACORD, Charles Bongomin)
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	Protection from and during Displacement (by NRC, Greta Zeender)
15:00-15:15	Coffee Break
15:15-17:00	Protection from and during Displacement (Cont.)

Day Two

8:30-10:45	How to ensure respect for the rights of IDPs? (by NRC, Andreas Danevad/Arild Birkenes)
10:45-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:30	How to ensure respect for the rights of IDPs? (Cont.)
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-16:00	Return and Resettlement (by NRC, Andreas Danevad/Greta Zeender)
16:00-16:15	Coffee Break
16:15-16:45	Conclusions and Recommendations
16:45	Closure

Annex 2- Workshop participants

Gulu district (1st workshop)

Camp Leaders

Name	Camp	County
Bilal Domomenic	Bibia	Kilak
Alengo Just	Attiak	Kilak
Ojok Wilson John	Pabbo	Kilak
Oponya Martine	Parabongo	Kilak
Oryema Charles	Awer	Kilak
Denis Lemoi	Pagak	Kilak
Tokema Lawrence	Kaladima	Kilak
Tom Okell Airi	Olwal	Kilak
Orayem Bosco	Guru Guru	Kilak
Orach Jackson	Labongogali	Kilak
Rubanga Mayubu Nick	Amuru	Kilak
Omona John	Ongako	Omor
Abola Embakasi	Palega	Omor
Ogwang Peter	Opit	Omor
Olanya Gomero Amen	Lalogi	Omor
Ojok Opolot	Acet	Omor
Obwonya Julio	Awere	Omor

Women Representatives

Name	Camp	County
Magdalena Judea	Bibia	Kilak
Ayero Regina	Attiak	Kilak
Acaye Betty	Pabbo	Kilak
Acan Evaline	Parabongo	Kilak
Christine Alanyo	Awer	Kilak
Alanyo Domitilla	Pagak	Kilak
Abonyo Kalima	Kaladima	Kilak
Awor Ajulina	Olwal	Kilak
Abdo Nighty	Guru Guru	Kilak
Ayaa Rosemary	Labongogali	Kilak
Santina Anyero	Amuru	Kilak
Aida Olwoch	Ongako	Omor
Akello Rosalba	Palenga	Omor
Florence Aryana	Opit	Omor
Terjina Oryang	Lalogi	Omor
Hellen Okot	Acet	Omor
Christine Okongo	Awere	Omor

LC III Chairpersons

Name	Camp	County
Odong William	Attiak	Kilak

Tookuma Marcellin	Pabbo	Kilak
Obwoya Walter	Lamogi	Kilak
J. B. Akot	Amuru	Kilak
Okot Renaldo	Ongako	Omoror
Alobo Martine	Bobo	Omoror
Munu Milton	Lakwana	Omoror
Olara John	Lalogi	Omoror
Olobo Matthew	Odek	Omoror

PADER DISTRICT	(second workshop)	
Achan Alice	Coordinator	Pader T/C
Amito Lucy	CDO	Pader T/C
Laker Joyce	P/O ACORD	Pader T/C
Rubanga-kene B.	Camp Commandant	Pader T/C
Mary Grace Abwoyo	P/O CARITAS	Pader T/C
Lily rose Okidi	PAWODI	Pader T/C
Onen Richard	Prog. Manager FORDE	Pader T/C
Betty Tokwiny	Women Leader	Pader T/C
Oyoo Angello	Camp Commandant	Adilang
Ayera Menya	Director D.L.C	Patongo
Okema J. Bruno	Camp Commandant	Pajule
Too-Oroma A. M.	KODA	Pader T/C
Obur Albinus	Camp Commandant	Patongo
Oneka Walter	Camp Commandant	Acholi-Bur
Ocana B. Otobong	Secretary G/P	Acholi-Bur
Olyel Nekanori	Camp Commandant	Lira Palwo

Mrs. Mary Olango	Women Leader	Lira Palwo
Oyat Vincent	Camp Commandant	Pajule
Dorine Onunga	Camp Commandant	Lapul
Omony Ernest	Secretary Education	Pajule
Dorine Okoyo	Women Leader	Aruu
Emima Anywar	Women Leader	Aruu
Charles Bongomin	Trainer/translator	ACORD
Omali Ceaser	Translator	Namokora
Emmanuel Okema	Translator/programme officer	ARLPI
Sarah Akera	Project Officer	Oxfam GB
KITGUM DISTRICT		
Ouma Patrick	Sub County Chief	Palabek/Kal
Kilama Samson	LC III	Palabek/kal
Otema John	Camp Commandant	Palabek/kal
Abodo R. Mary	Women Representative	Palabek/kal
Achan Betty	Women Representative	Palabek/kal
Olal J.S Patrick	C/P LC III	Palabek-Gem
Balmoi R. Baluti	Sub County Chief	Palabek-Gem
Olanya Quinto	Camp Commandant	Palabek-Gem
Lamwaka Helen	Women Representative	Palabek-Gem
Laker Grace	Women Representative	Palabek-Gem
Arop William	Sub County Chief	Maid-Opei
Langoya Stephene	C/P LC III	Maid-Opei
Okot John Lucima	Camp Commandant	Maid-Opei
Amito yolanda	Women Representative	Maid-Opei
Wokorach Michael	Sub County Chief	Agoro
Okot Valent	C/P LC III	Agoro

Okongo D'Kam	Camp Commandant	Agoro
Aciro Jacqueline	Women Representative	Agoro
Atim Roselyne	Sub County Chief	Padibe
Ogero Jenny	C/P LC III	Padibe
Lakang Ogwal	Women Representative	Padibe
Lalweny C. Opiyo	Women Representative	Padibe
Santina Oran	C/P LC III	Padibe
Bongomin Fidensio	Camp Commandant	Padibe
Oling E. E.	C/P LC III	Lokung
Okuna Richard	Sub County Chief	Lokung
Ogiki Tom	Camp Commandant	Lokung
Achan Sabina	Women Representative	Lokung
Achola Betty	Women Representative	Lokung
Auma Florence	Women Representative	Padibe

Gulu District (3rd workshop)

Camp Leaders

Name	CAMP	COUNTY
Lagulu Godfrey	Alero	Nwoya
Okumu Francis Ojwang	Anaka	Nwoya
Ocaya Severio	Aparanga	Nwoya
Rev. Gidion Onyuta	Purongo	Nwoya
Owiny Michael	Agung	Nwoya
Oto Maatine	Olwiyo	Nwoya
Ojara Jakob	Wii Anaka	Nwoya
Odong Jolly Joe	Koch Goma	Nwoya

Odong Joseph	Wiya Nono	Nwoya
Odoki Ray Lamaka	Unyama	Aswa
Opwonya Vincent	Paicho	Aswa
Oola Timothy	Teya Padhola	Aswa
Oto Augustine	Awach	Aswa
Nyeko Frederick	Ajulu/Patiko	Aswa
David Ngole	Palaro	Aswa
Lubanga Kene Vincent	Oroko	Aswa

Women Representatives

Name	CAMP	COUNTY
Atim Rose	Alero	Nwoya
Jane Okello	Anaka	Nwoya
Akumu Jennifer	Aparanga	Nwoya
Abur Mary	Purongo	Nwoya
Akello Alice	Agung	Nwoya
Kifola Grace	Olwiyo	Nwoya
Anena Evaline	Wii Anaka	Nwoya
Atto Margret	Koch Goma	Nwoya
Awoto Magdalene	Wiya Nono	Nwoya
Ajok Santa	Unyama	Aswa
Obur Margret	Paicho	Aswa
Abalo Catherine Achellam	Teya Padhola	Aswa

Alur Evaline	Awach	Aswa
Akwongo Molly Pido	Ajulu/Patiko	Aswa
Aida Ocen	Palaro	Aswa
Acan Margaret	Oroko	Aswa

LCIII Chairpersons

Name	Camp/Division	County
Otto George	Alero	Nwoya
Akana Walter	Anaka	Nwoya
Okat Mark	Purongo	Nwoya
Okello Bernard Victor	Koch Goma	Nwoya
Akumu Catherine	Paicho	Aswa
Kalukwera Andrew	Awach	Aswa
Arop Jeo	Patiko	Aswa
Nyeke Geoffrey	Palaro	Aswa
Okot Audustine	Pece Division	Municipality
Odong Walter	Layibi Division	Municipality
Achire Christoper	Bar Dege Division	Municipality
Obolo Ochaya	Laroo Division	Municipality