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Uganda: Focus shifts to securing durable solutions for IDPs

Significant improvements in the security situation in northern Uganda have allowed about half of the more than 1.8 million people who had been internally displaced by the conflict to return to their villages, while another quarter have moved to transit sites nearer to their homes.

While the peace process has stalled due to the repeated failure by the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army, Joseph Kony, to sign a Final Peace Agreement, the security situation in northern Uganda has much improved since the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the government of Uganda and the LRA in August 2006. Large numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) have already returned to their villages, while others are in the process of doing so.

The main challenge for returning IDPs, local and national government, and Uganda's humanitarian and development partners is now to secure durable solutions. High levels of criminal activity and a lack of capacity on the part of the police and the judicial system pose a continuing threat to the security of the population.

About 1.2 million IDPs and returnees in northern Uganda remain highly food-insecure as the result of bad weather and lack of seeds and fertiliser. The mid-year review of the Consolidated Appeal for Uganda notes "an appalling lack of basic services in transit sites and return areas", which forms a major obstacle to the return process. Limited access to clean water and the almost total absence of sanitation facilities in return areas need to be addressed urgently to avert the risk of an increase in water-borne diseases.

Vulnerable groups of IDPs including elderly people, disabled people, orphans and child-headed households face particular obstacles in relation to the returns process. They are over-represented in the remaining camp population, while at the same time their support base in the camps continues to diminish as other residents depart.

As increasing numbers of IDPs have returned to their villages, so the number of land disputes there has risen. There have also been disputes over the land on which the camps are situated, involving those IDPs who have decided to remain in those communities near basic services such as schools and clinics.



More maps are available on <http://www.internal-displacement.org/>

Background: war and displacement in northern Uganda

The conflict in northern Uganda began in 1986 and ultimately caused the displacement of an estimated 1.8 million people. A history of antagonism and distrust between the Acholi people of northern Uganda and southern-based tribes dominating the government contributed to the forming of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in 1987, after the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by current President Yoweri Museveni overthrew President Tito Okello, an ethnic Acholi, in January 1986 (LIU, 30 October 2003, p.33; RLP, February 2004, p.5; CSOPNU, 10 December 2004, p.28). Since 1988 the LRA under Joseph Kony has fought a low-level guerrilla war in an ostensible effort to overthrow Museveni's government, rebuild the Acholi nation and culture and purportedly ensure that Uganda is ruled in accordance with the biblical ten commandments (CSOPNU, 10 December 2004, p.28).

In the period up to 1996, some people in the Acholi sub-region fled their villages as a direct result of LRA attacks, mainly in the districts of Kitgum and Pader (W. Weeks, March 2002, p.2). But the main cause of the subsequent large-scale displacement in northern Uganda was the government's decision in 1996 to force civilians into IDP camps which it described as "protected villages" (RLP, February 2004, p.25; CSOPNU, 10 December 2004, p.6 and 31 December 2004, p.1; HRW, September 2005, p.10, Reuters, 21 February 2008). As rebel activity increased, the government sought to separate civilians from the rebels in order to reduce the LRA's ability to benefit from suspected civilian collaborators

and to clear the territory for military operations (CSOPNU, 10 December 2004, p.6).

In October 2002 the displacement crisis worsened when the army, in the course of a large-scale offensive entitled "Operation Iron Fist", ordered all civilians remaining in "abandoned villages" to move to government camps within 48 hours. With the consent of the Sudanese government, the Ugandan army targeted the LRA's rear bases in southern Sudan. The rebels responded by returning to northern Uganda where they carried out an increasing number of abductions, killings and lootings. The IDP population grew from 500,000 to almost 800,000 by the end of 2002 (HRW, September 2005, p.9). During this period, the area affected by displacement expanded as the LRA moved eastwards into the Lango and Teso sub-regions of eastern Uganda. In March 2004, after the failure of Operation Iron Fist, the Ugandan army, with renewed support from the Sudanese government, launched "Operation Iron Fist II". By the end of 2005, a total of about 1.8 million people had been forced to leave their homes.

The policy of forced encampment dramatically increased people's vulnerability. The LRA succeeded repeatedly in attacking IDP camps despite the deployment of the army to protect them. The failure to ensure security and the appalling humanitarian conditions in the camps further entrenched the Acholi people's sense of political and social marginalisation (CSOPNU, 10 December 2004, p.2; RLP, February 2004, p.25; The Monitor, 26 August).

Meanwhile, an unknown number of people moved to towns and trading centres across northern Uganda instead of camps, while others moved further away to places like Masindi, Jinja and Kampala. Estimates of the number of urban IDPs in Uganda have ranged from 300,000 to 600,000 (RLP, 17 December 2007).

The overall impact of the conflict on children in northern Uganda has been especially acute. The LRA largely consists of abducted children who have been forced to become child soldiers or sex slaves to commanding officers. By early 2007, UNICEF estimated that since the beginning of the conflict in 1986, an estimated 25,000 children had been abducted, including 7,500 girls of whom 1,000 had conceived children during captivity (UNICEF, January 2007). The LRA has thus far resisted international calls to release all the women and children it currently holds (ICG, 14 September 2007, p.6; UNICEF, 16 April 2008, p.2).

A survey conducted in northern Uganda reported that 54 per cent of the population suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), while over two thirds showed symptoms of depression, amongst the highest rates ever recorded anywhere in the world (Roberts et al., 19 May 2008).

Peace negotiations stall at final hurdle

Peace talks between the government and the LRA began in the southern Sudanese town of Juba in July 2006, marking the third attempt to negotiate a peace agreement since 1994. In August 2006, the government of Uganda and the LRA

signed the landmark Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA), which resulted in substantial improvements in the security conditions and in humanitarian access.

The signing of the CHA paved the way for further negotiations, and the parties signed agreements on comprehensive solutions to the conflict in May 2007, and on reconciliation and accountability in June 2007. In February 2008, five further agreements were signed in rapid succession: an annexe on the implementation of the accountability and reconciliation agreement; an annexe on the implementation of comprehensive solutions; a permanent ceasefire; an agreement on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration; and an agreement on implementation and monitoring mechanisms (ICG, 14 September 2007).

Kony had not been present in person on any of these occasions, and he failed to appear to sign a final peace agreement on 10 April 2008. Successive attempts since then to obtain Kony's signature have all failed (Chief Mediator Riek Machar, 11 September 2008). The LRA has consistently referred to the July 2005 indictments by the International Criminal Court of Kony and four other LRA commanders as the major obstacle to signing the final peace agreement, but it continues to insist that it is committed to the peace process (Sudan Tribune, 17 September 2008; OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.6; ICC, 14 October 2005). However, other stakeholders in the process and independent observers have expressed doubts that the LRA's professed interest in peace is genuine (IWPR, 22 September 2008; New Vision, 25 September 2008).

While the security situation in northern Uganda has improved significantly since the signing of the CHA in 2006, the LRA has increasingly become a regional security threat. In 2008 the LRA has attacked villages and abducted several hundred civilians in the Central African Republic (CAR), Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (BBC, 9 September 2008; Resolve Uganda, September 2008; OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.6). In September 2008, the LRA attacked an army base in southern Sudan and a nearby village, abducting more than 50 children and burning down homes (BBC, 19 September 2008). Separate attacks in the DRC around the same time forced some 75,000 civilians to flee (BBC, 25 September 2008; Sudan Tribune, 27 September 2008), with the LRA reported to have abducted some 90 children (Reuters, 22 September; IWPR, 22 September 2008; OCHA, 10 October 2008). The Congolese army has launched an operation to contain the LRA with the assistance of MONUC (the UN peace-keeping force in the DRC), but doubts persist about the effectiveness of this operation (Reuters, 22 September 2008; Senator Russ Feingold, 16 September 2008; BBC, 8 September 2008; Economist, 14 August 2008).

Background: crisis and displacement in Karamoja

The north-eastern sub-region of Karamoja continues to suffer from violence, mainly related to cattle-rustling by semi-nomadic pastoralist Karamojong warriors. Inter-clan fighting is still rampant, but the Karamojong have increasingly directed violence at clans living over the border in Kenya, as well as against the Ugandan army, local defence

units and civilians in the Teso sub-region (GoU, 15 June 2005; UHRC, September 2004). The violence in Karamoja is rooted in a history of neglect, shrinking access to pasture and grazing land for cattle, and successive years of drought. The commercialisation of cattle-rustling and the wide availability of small arms have contributed to the violence.

In May 2006 President Museveni directed the Ugandan army to begin “cordon and search” disarmament operations (GoU, January 2007, p.12; OHCHR, 24 November 2006, p.3; IRIN, 13 November 2006). The operations have been characterised by excessive use of force by the Ugandan army, and widespread human rights abuses including killings, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and looting and destruction of property (OCHA, 7 November 2006; OHCHR, 24 November 2006; HRW, September 2007, pp.36-66; OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.8). The situation has once more deteriorated in 2008 after improving noticeably around the middle part of 2007 (OCHA, 10 December 2007, p.12 and 16 July 2008, p.6). The disarmament operations have continued in 2008, although there has been a dramatic decline in the number of weapons seized during these operations (OCHA, 29 February 2008, 31 July 2008, and 16 July 2008, p.6; OHCHR, 3 September 2007).

Karamoja has the worst humanitarian and development indicators in the country, including the highest maternal and infant mortality rates and lowest life expectancy. 82 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, only 11 per cent are literate, less than half (43 per cent) have access to safe water and only 9 per cent to sanitation (ERC, 25 September

2008; IRIN, 2 October 2008). The continuing inadequacy of government services, such as social, medical and judicial institutions, has contributed to an overall breakdown in the rule of law.

A persistent drought is contributing to a rapidly worsening food crisis in Karamoja: by August 2008, 750,000 people were highly food insecure and in need of food aid; the number could rise to 900,000 by the end of 2009 (Famine Early Warning Systems Network, August 2008; OCHA, 16 July 2008, pp.9-10; ERC, 25 September 2008).

Movements of women and children away from Karamoja in search of food and employment have led to increasing vulnerabilities and have given rise to new protection concerns for these Karamojong (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.9 and 31 March 2008, p.5; ASB *et al.*, 9 July 2008; OCHA and OPM, 18 April 2008; Feinstein International Center, June 2007). Their movements from Karamoja to Pader district in search of food have led to concerns over the pressure on scarce resources in a region that is itself only just beginning to emerge from two decades of crisis (The New Vision, 30 September 2008).

While the disarmament campaign has disrupted traditional movement patterns and has caused displacement within Karamoja, there are no accurate estimates of the number of people in Karamoja who are displaced, and it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish forced displacements from the ordinary movements of the semi-nomadic Karamojong. Nevertheless, a representative of the international humanitarian community in Uganda has estimated that about 30 per

cent of all displacement in Karamoja is related to the ongoing disarmament campaign (IDMC interview, 12 November 2007).

Independent observers doubt that the disarmament operations, and the extensive presence of the army in Karamoja, can ultimately succeed in restoring law and order in the region, or in reducing the demand for weapons. Instead, they suggest that security can only be restored by means of an integrated development plan to bring Karamoja up to the same economic and development levels as the rest of the country (ERC, 25 September 2008; OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.8; OCHA and OPM, 18 April 2008). In April 2008 the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP) was launched as a sub-programme within the overall Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP) (OCHA, 30 April 2008). However, while there is substantial support from international humanitarian and development partners for the overall development objectives contained in the KIDDP, there are concerns that the KIDDP describes the continuation of disarmament operations, which have themselves regularly led to human rights violations, as a precondition of development activity (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.8).

Patterns of return

The continued stability across northern Uganda has led the government of Uganda to lift all remaining restrictions on the freedom of movement for IDPs (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.6), and the improvement in the security situation since the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in August 2006 has encour-

aged large numbers of IDPs to leave the camps. Some have returned to their villages of origin, while others have moved to so-called transit sites. In some cases these sites are closer to IDPs' land, enabling IDPs to access their land during the day for cultivation and return to safety at night, while in other cases the main reason for moving to a transit site is to escape the highly congested conditions in the camps.

By September 2008, in the sub-regions of Acholi, West Nile, Toro-Bunyoro and Teso 562,000 people remained in camps, 359,000 had moved to transit sites, and 539,000 IDPs had returned to their home areas (IASC, September 2008). However, it must be noted that the distinction between returnees and IDPs has to some extent become blurred by the high levels of mobility between camps, villages and transit sites (Oxfam, September 2008, p.7).

Moreover, the pace of returns has varied widely between regions. In Acholi, 459,000 people (41 per cent) remained in camps as of September 2008, with 355,000 (32 per cent) in transit sites and only 399,000 (36 per cent) in home villages. In Teso, by September 21,000 people (15 per cent) were still in camps, while 4,000 (3 per cent) had moved to transit sites and 112,000 (78 per cent) were back in their home villages.

In the Lango sub-region all of the 61 IDP camps had officially been phased out by the end of March 2008, although OCHA noted at the time that "several thousand" IDPs remained in the former camps (OCHA, 31 March 2008). A June 2008 inter-agency assessment determined that displacement had ended for all the origi-

nal 466,000 IDPs in Lango in accordance with the Framework for Durable Solutions. Apart from about 700 people with specific needs who remained in former camp locations without family or community support, any remaining needs of former IDPs were found not to be specifically related to people's previous displacement (OHCHR et al, 24 June 2008; OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.10). It must be noted that the one-day assessment was based on interviews with 151 former IDPs in only three locations in Lango.

Obstacles to return: security concerns

There is some degree of uncertainty about the choices IDPs will make to return to their villages or to settle elsewhere. A significant number of the people who have not yet returned to their villages may not in fact intend to move all the way back to their own land, preferring instead to live in communities near services such as health clinics and schools, as long as they are close enough to access their land on a daily basis. A 2007 study by OCHA observed that 46 per cent of displaced people in Gulu district resided in camps within three kilometres of their land, and that a significant proportion of these people might not intend to move out of the camps at all (OCHA, 31 August 2007, p.5).

IDPs who do intend to leave the camps have pointed out a number of reasons why they have not yet returned to their home villages: security concerns, problems related to a lack of services in the return areas, and a lack of access to land and shelter.

People in northern Uganda continue to be concerned about the possibility of renewed hostilities between the LRA and the army (UNHCR and HelpAge, June 2008, p.12). A December 2007 UNDP report stated that many IDPs in the Acholi region were waiting for a peace agreement to be signed before returning home, and that some IDPs were even planning to wait for some time to see if any peace agreement held before leaving the camps (UNDP, December 2007, p.38, see also IWPR 12 December 2007).

Moreover, while LRA activity in northern Uganda has largely ceased, areas bordering Karamoja continue to be affected by Karamojong incursions. The continued deployment of Anti Stock Theft Units (ASTUs) has contributed to improvements of the security in these areas, but high levels of insecurity posed by Karamojong raids continue to discourage the return of IDPs in Katakwi and Amuria districts in the Teso sub-region and in Pader and Kitgum districts in the Acholi sub-region (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.6).

Landmines and unexploded ordnance also continue to present an obstacle to the returns process (UNDP, December 2007, p.24; OCHA, 10 December 2007, p.13; OCHA, 29 February 2008, p.1). However, demining activities continue in return areas in northern Uganda, and the Uganda Mine Action Centre has opened a regional office in Gulu to cover the Acholi, Teso and Lango sub-regions. It has been reported that communities have asked for money in exchange for information about the location of mines and unexploded ordnance (OCHA, 31 August 2008).

The gravest threat to security in northern Uganda is now posed by criminal activities, and there is a shortage of properly trained and qualified police officers to deal with this (OCHA, 31 August 2008; New Vision, 10 September 2008). The government has sought to address the problem through the deployment of Special Police Constables (SPCs), who now outnumber the regular police. However, no proper vetting procedures are in place for the recruitment of SPCs, and they receive as little as one month's training (Oxfam, September 2008, p.10), but they have the same powers as regular police officers to investigate, arrest and interrogate suspects. As a consequence, the SPCs have in some cases hindered rather than contributed to the restoration of the rule of law. The effectiveness of the SPCs is further undermined by delays in payment of their wages (Oxfam, September 2008, p.10; OCHA, 29 February 2008, p.5). There are similar problems with the ASTUs on the border with Karamoja (OCHA, 30 November 2007, p.5; IDMC, 13 November 2007; OCHA, 29 February 2008, p.5).

Obstacles to return: lack of services in return areas

The mid-year review of the 2008 Consolidated Appeal for Uganda noted "an appalling lack of basic services in transit sites and return areas" (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.7). A 2007 UNDP report noted that when IDPs were asked what needed to be in place before they could return to their homes, people cited basic social services such as health centres, boreholes, and primary schools as most important. They also frequently referred to the need for roads (UNDP, December 2007, p.36).

The risks of poor social service delivery in return areas were demonstrated in Lira district in the Lango sub-region, where the returnee population suffered an increase in malnutrition and mortality rates between 2006 and 2007 as a result of insufficient food and reduced access to basic services once they left the camps (OCHA, 17 July 2007, p.1; UNHCR, August 2007, p.7; Monitor, 8 March 2008; OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.19; Oxfam, September 2008, p.8). The Lira experience highlights the paramount importance of appropriate action to assist returnees in their places of return (Uganda Health, Nutrition, and HIV/AIDS Cluster, December 2007, p.4; WFP, 25 January 2008, p.7).

In August 2008, agricultural experts warned that food insecurity in the north was approaching crisis levels due to a combination of factors including bad weather and lack of adequate seeds and fertiliser (IRIN, 19 August 2008). As a result, 1.2 million IDPs and returnees in northern Uganda remained highly food insecure. The World Food Programme (WFP) and its implementing partners continue to struggle to serve these populations despite the resource shortfalls and logistical challenges (Famine Early Warning Systems Network, August 2008, p.1).

The mid-year review of the Consolidated Appeal observed that while the water and sanitation situation in IDP camps in northern Uganda was relatively good, “the situation is appalling in return areas with grossly limited access to water and virtually no sanitation facilities” (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.12). Local government officials have warned that immediate action is required to address these prob-

lems, in order to avert the risk of an increase of water-borne diseases in the return areas (The Monitor, 26 September 2008).

Schools in the return areas struggle with a lack of facilities, including housing for teachers, classroom facilities, latrines and water points. A lack of qualified teachers and absenteeism among teachers further adds to the reluctance of students to return to pre-displacement locations (IWPR, 1 September 2008; OCHA, 29 February 2008, pp.2-3). By August 2008, more than 200 primary schools across the Acholi sub-region were either still based in the camps to which they had relocated during the war, or had returned to their original locations but lacked structures of any kind and were operating under trees, or were facing problems such as lack of access to safe water sources (OCHA, 31 August 2008, p.2).

The lack of services and school facilities in the return areas has generated new protection concerns in relation to children. A common response to the inadequate service provision in the return areas is voluntary family separation, with parents returning to their villages of origin while leaving their children behind in the camps. As a result, thousands of children are living in IDP camps without caregivers, facing a heightened risk of dropping out of school, neglect, abuse and exploitation including sexual violence (OCHA, 10 December 2007, p.34).

Vulnerable groups of IDPs, including elderly people, disabled people, and orphans and child-headed households, face particular obstacles in relation to the returns process (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.10). A study by the Ministry of Health

showed that elderly and disabled people were over-represented in the remaining camp population (The New Vision, 15 April 2008). A disability advocacy group has warned that IDPs with disabilities, including war victims, are already facing difficulties in the camps such as food shortages and inaccessibility of public services, but they are now coming under increasing pressure from both local governments and landowners to leave the camps and return to their home areas, where many would be unable to resume a normal life (Advocacy Project, 23 September 2008).

An inter-agency assessment in Lango in May 2008 showed that of the 517 extremely vulnerable individuals who were surveyed and who were still living in the former camps despite the fact that these camps had been officially closed down, 68 per cent were elderly people, most of whom indicated that while their preferred option was to return to their villages, they were unable to do so (email to IDMC, 2 July 2008). Elderly people have indicated that the main problems they face include lack of shelter in their villages of origin, as well as lack of access to safe drinking water and lack of access to nearby health facilities (UNHCR and HelpAge, June 2008, pp.12-13).

Obstacles to return: land disputes

As an increasing number of IDPs have returned to their land, the number of land disputes has risen (IRIN, 1 October 2008; Oxfam, September 2008, p.12; World Bank, February 2008, p.ii; UNDP, December 2007, pp.31, 43-44). Because of the length of displacement in northern Uganda, not all returnees are able to recall the exact boundaries of their land,

while other returnees, including orphans who grew up in the camps, do not know at all where their family's land is. Some returnees have taken advantage of the fact that their former neighbours have not yet returned by moving the boundaries of their land, something which is likely to further disadvantage vulnerable IDPs who are likely to return to their villages later than others. For example, in northern Uganda, 23 per cent of all households are headed by women, and these female-headed households are known to be less likely than other households to be among the early returnees (UNDP, December 2007, pp.12,50).

Some widowed women are faced with attempts by their in-laws to deny them access to their deceased husbands' land; this is a particular concern as 18 per cent of women in the north between the ages of 30 and 49 are widows, twice as many as in the rest of Uganda (UNDP, December 2007, p.12). The speaker of Amuru district has drawn attention to the plight of at least 3,000 widows and orphans who are stuck in IDP camps because they have been denied access to their ancestral land by relatives who have either seized or sold the land (The Monitor, 18 September 2008).

Nonetheless, care must be taken not to generalise and treat all widows and all orphans as vulnerable individuals: their level of vulnerability is determined above all by the relationships these individuals have with their relatives and their clans (HURIFO, September 2007, pp.34-38).

National response

In 2004, Uganda adopted a National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons, one

of the first countries in the world to do so. The Policy guarantees IDPs' right not to be forcibly returned, and to choose freely whether to return in safety and dignity or to settle in another part of the country (Office of the Prime Minister, August 2004, section 3.4). However, there are concerns that local government officials are exerting undue pressure on IDPs to leave the camps and return to their villages (Oxfam, September 2008, pp.13-17; *The New Vision*, 13 August 2008). At the same time, the government is yet to deliver on its commitment to provide resettlement packages to all returning IDPs (IDP Policy, OPM, August 2004, section 3.14; Oxfam, September 2008, p.14).

On 15 October 2007, after repeated delays, the government launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for Northern Uganda, including Acholi, Lango, Teso, West Nile, Karamoja, and Elgon sub-regions. The PRDP is a comprehensive development framework aimed at bringing socio-economic indicators in those areas affected by conflict and breakdown in law and order into line with national standards as defined by Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) of 2004. The PRDP has four strategic objectives: consolidation of state authority, rebuilding and empowering communities, revitalisation of the economy, and peace building and reconciliation. The total estimated three-year budget of the PRDP is \$606 million (Government of Uganda, September 2007, pp.vi-ix).

The PRDP could enable significant progress in countering the real and perceived neglect and marginalisation that lie at the root of the conflict in northern Uganda.

However, its implementation, which officially did not begin until July 2008, remains a significant challenge, not least because it is not clear how the PRDP will result in extra funds at the district level and who will oversee its implementation (Oxfam, September 2008, pp.18-19). Opposition politicians in northern Uganda have expressed doubts about the effectiveness of funding channelled through the PRDP (*The Monitor*, 2 October 2008 and 10 September 2008).

Finally, the Refugee Law Project in Kampala has raised concerns that the estimated 300,000 to 600,000 urban IDPs in the country have yet to receive the same level of attention and assistance as the camp-based IDPs in the north, and that no provision is being made to assist urban IDPs to return home (RLP, October 2008, July 2008, March 2008 and December 2007; *The Monitor*, 12 December 2007 and 17 December 2007). IDPs from northern Uganda who fled to the Kome Islands in Uganda's Mukono district petitioned the government for help to return to their home villages in the north (*UGPulse*, 1 October 2008).

International response

In light of the improved security situation in northern Uganda since the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in August 2006, and the large-scale returns which the region is witnessing as a result, urgent and effective measures are needed to set northern Uganda on a path to recovery and development. However, the management and coordination of the transition from humanitarian relief to development has so far been characterised by "institutional confusion and weak leadership" (Oxfam, September 2008,

p.17; see also Resolve Uganda, September 2008).

In response to the lack of clarity from the government and the UN in Uganda, donor governments have adopted a wait-and-see approach, and donor funding for recovery has not been sufficiently forthcoming. The mid-year review of the Consolidated Appeal warned that “low donor response has left the various clusters without the means of implementing most of their transitional programming. [...] It is critical that all partners recognise the potential risk: if humanitarian concerns persist or worsen due to lack of funding for projects aimed at stabilising displaced and returning populations, any sustainable recovery will be delayed, or even jeopardised” (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.1). As of 5 October 2008, the Consolidated Appeal for Uganda for 2008 was 55 per cent funded (OCHA, 5 October 2008).

Uganda was one of the pilot countries for the implementation of the cluster approach under the humanitarian reform process. The coordination mechanisms set up in line with the cluster approach have to some extent functioned as parallel mechanisms, next to the local government structures in northern Uganda. With the transition from humanitarian relief to development, there is growing attention to the need to hand over responsibility to local government authorities for the delivery of social services and the provision of protection to the population of northern Uganda. However, local government itself has been severely weakened by two decades of conflict. For recovery efforts to be sustainable, all actors must prioritise the strengthening of local government structures (Oxfam, September 2008, pp.22-23).

Note: This is a summary of the IDMC’s Internal Displacement profile. The full profile is available online [here](#).

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About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people. In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at www.internal-displacement.org.

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