

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- **ALL EYES ON JUBA AS PARTIES GATHER FOR SIGNING CEREMONY; LRA REPORTEDLY MOVES TOWARD CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**
- **PILOT OF 'PARISH APPROACH' LAUNCHED IN LALOGI SUB-COUNTY, GULU DISTRICT**
- **SUBSTANTIAL POPULATION MIGRATION TO 'RE-SETTLEMENT' AREAS IN KARAMOJA**

II. SECURITY AND ACCESS

SECURITY

The security situation in **northern Uganda** has remained generally quiet throughout the month, with no reports of activity by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the region. However, LRA movements from the Democratic Republic of Congo toward the Central African Republic have been reported. Two incidents, allegedly involving LRA groups, were also reported. The first, a raid on the village of Ezo (between the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and Sudan) was reported to have occurred on 16-17 March, with approximately 20 people abducted. The second – looting at Nabiapai (21 kilometres south of Yambio) – reportedly occurred on 22 March.

Within the northern Uganda region, several incidents of criminality were reported, with the population expressing concern about the rising incidence of crime. In Gulu, the widespread availability of guns and an increasing number of idle youths are believed to be the main reasons for the hike in crime rates. More than 20 guns were voluntarily handed over to the office of the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) by youths during the month. The RDC, in consultation with stakeholders, is lobbying for an extension of the amnesty programme to cover defectors of all armed groups.

Frequent raids, suspected to be the work of illegally-armed Karimojong, have been reported in eastern sub-counties of Kitgum, Pader and Lira Districts. During the dry season, illegally-armed Karimojong cross into neighbouring districts and Kenya in search of pasture and water for their animals; moving through areas, they often carry out raids and clash with Anti Stock Theft Units (ASTUs) and the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF).

In **Karamoja**, low levels of aggressiveness were reported at the beginning of the month, but gained momentum in the third week. By month's end, aggressive Karimojong activities were at their highest in six months, with 67 incidents reported. The upsurge in aggressiveness is likely linked to the sustained disarmament operations being conducted by the UPDF: 15 operations have reportedly taken place in the past month, with 43 guns seized and several hundred individuals arrested. However, in a change of tactics, the UPDF has begun seizing cattle to be returned against guns handed over. The Government also announced that illegally-armed Karimojong that did not surrender their weapons voluntarily would be court-martialled.

Meanwhile, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) in Moroto District resigned and quitted the district after receiving death threats.

III. POPULATION MOVEMENT

Region	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 Source WFP	1,102,438	648,801	59%	352,440	32%	101,561	9%
Lango Source IOM	466,103	-	-	-	-	466,103	100%
Teso* Source OCHA	124,991	76,000	61%	21,000	17%	36,000	29%
Total	1,693,532	724,801	43%	373,440	22%	603,664	36%

Source: IASC Working Group, February 2008.

Across the Acholi sub-region, movement out of internally displaced persons (IDPs) out of camps has been increasing in the first months of the year, although there has been no large scale movement to transit sites /

villages of origin; rather significant back-and-forth movements have been reported as IDPs have returned home temporarily to prepare their gardens for the first planting season.

In Gulu, the Durable Solutions Task Force carried out an inter-agency assessment in Lalogi sub-county as a precursor to implementation of a pilot project based on the Parish Approach¹. Conducted across all five parishes of Lalogi sub-county and covering camps, transit sites, and villages of origin, the assessment's findings and a plan of action were to be developed for presentation and endorsement at the Gulu DDMC meeting on 10 April.

In Amuru, the preliminary report from the District Security Committee's visit of return areas highlighted the lack of basic services as a chief impediment to return. Most IDPs are settled at transit sites at which some services are available, rather than villages of origin.

The findings of a rapid Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA), carried out by the Food Security Working Group in 20 camps in Gulu, listed a number of constraints to population movement cited by IDPs, including security concerns (79 per cent), waiting for the availability of local building materials (53 per cent), waiting for the signing of a final peace agreement between the LRA and the Government of Uganda (46 per cent) and waiting for a directive to return from the Government (30 per cent).

Similarly, in Kitgum, frequently cited reasons for maintaining a home in the camp, even if a family resided elsewhere was the availability of services and continuing general food distributions. Generally, the biggest obstacle to return or resettlement is lack of thatching grass: bush fires and demand from returnees has resulted in the depletion of the grass in areas.

Meanwhile, the last remaining IDP camp in the Lango sub-region – Olilim camp in Lira District – was officially de-gazetted during the March District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) meeting. Several thousand internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in former camps, including 669 extremely vulnerable individuals, but while the DDMC recognizes the figure, there are officially no more camps in Lango.

In Karamoja, the temporary improvement in security led to a substantial population migration into new resettlement areas such as Apeitolim and Nabwal in Moroto. Since October 2007, the population in Apeitolim has risen four-fold to 4,500, while the population of Nabwal has risen from 700 in November 2007 to an estimated 14,000. Furthermore, it is estimated that as many as 19,000 people might settle in Nabwal and 25,000 in Apeitolim. Estimated are still being gathered for the number of people who have settled in Lokales in Nakapiririt and in new resettlement sites in Abim.

IV. CLUSTER RESPONSE

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT (CCCM)

In Kitgum, a consultative workshop was held on 19 March to chart a way forward for the cluster's activities in regard to camp phase-out and camp closure, as well as durable solutions; a camp phase-out and camp closure action plan for the district has been drafted. Similarly, a consultative meeting with stakeholders in Gulu in early March resulted in the development of a plan of action on camp coordination and camp management and return and resettlement. In Pader, meanwhile, a camp phase-out working group has been established within the cluster and is consulting on draft camp phase-out guidelines that are to be presented to the DDMC for approval. An inter-agency assessment of ten camps is planned for April and May.

EDUCATION

In Gulu, all but 10 of 64 displaced schools have returned to their original sites, while in Amuru 33 of 53 schools have returned. However, academics are constrained by the lack of adequate numbers of teachers, teacher houses and other infrastructure. The Ministry of Public Service has authorised Gulu district to recruit only 60 teachers, given that its registry shows that there are enough teachers in the district. In response, a detailed assessment of schools in Gulu and Amuru Districts is planned for April to register the number of teachers in both districts and eliminate ghost teachers from the central government payroll.

¹ The Parish Approach aims to facilitate the transition from the humanitarian to the recovery phase by rehabilitating priority basic service infrastructure at locations identified by district authorities in consultation with humanitarian actors and which are accessible to both IDPs in transit sites and returnees in villages of origin. *Office of the Prime Minister – Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), "Transition Approach for LRA Affected Northern Uganda"*.

Kitgum District has completed a headcount of students in post-primary schools under the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme, with preliminary results indicating that the number of students in rural schools has dropped significantly compared to the number in town schools over the last year. Schools in towns have registered an influx in the number of students due to their better facilities; however, the influx has led to challenges including inadequate classroom and dormitory space, water and sanitation facilities and number of teachers. Reports also indicate that some headmasters have insisted on students registering only in the school associated with their village. As schools have to return to their original locations, this has meant students must walk long distances from IDP camps and/or transit sites to attend returned schools.

In Pader, increased support supervision has been recommended to counteract the high levels of teacher absenteeism, cited as one of the greatest challenges to education along with lack of school infrastructure. On the latter front, classes in 63 schools are taking place under trees due to a lack of classrooms. Cluster members have pledged to construct new classrooms, but the onset of the rainy season has hindered activities. At present, only 1,224 of the needed 2,870 classrooms in district primary schools are in place.

Cluster members working in the Lango sub-region have completed and handed over 41 teacher houses and are embarking on the next round of the back-to-school campaign, which in 2007 saw 40 schools participating in football and netball games over a three-month period and realized an eight per cent increase in enrolment. A one-page summary of challenges to education in the sub-region has been drafted in order to guide a systematic response.

In Karamoja, agencies have undertaken to increase enrolment including 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.

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS (FSAL)

Most agencies working on agricultural livelihoods in Gulu and Amuru Districts are shifting away from the emergency distribution of farming inputs to more sustainable livelihood options such as cash- or coupons-for-work and other income generating activities. Meanwhile, parish-level general food distributions are expanding in locations of 500 plus households. It is hoped that this will reduce recipients' challenges of covering long distances from return sites to former IDP camps. Some 4,321 flood-affected households received three kilogrammes (kg) of millet and 15 kg of bean seeds from the district. Other agencies have also been distributing inputs for the first planting season, although the distribution is of lower scale than previously; some farmers will have to rely on their seed reserves to cultivate their gardens.

In Karamoja, meanwhile, the first round of 2008 food distributions was completed in the most food insecure areas in Moroto, where hunger is increasingly evident. The average global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate for the Karamoja region is 10.9 per cent according to preliminary figures from the Ministry of Health, while much higher rates have been registered in specific locations, particularly Moroto at 15.6 per cent. In the first round of distributions, 17,766 people in Moroto received food, while 26,363 people received second-round distributions. Initially, some 36,000 of the most food-insecure were targeted for immediate assistance. Over the next six months, more than 700,000 Karimojong could be in need of nearly 35,000 metric tons (MT) of food: nearly 410,000 people living in areas classified as acute food and livelihood crisis are recommended for 50 per cent RDA (recommended daily allowance) rations, while nearly 300,000 people in areas of humanitarian emergency are recommended for a 70 per cent ration.

GOVERNANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND LIVELIHOODS (GIL)

Mine Action: During the reporting period, 61 UXOs were reported in Gulu and Amuru, with 26 destroyed. The total number of UXOs now pending destruction is 226 (105 in Gulu and 121 in Amuru). Speedy programme implementation in terms of coordination, monitoring and support has been hampered by the absence of a UMAC field office in northern Uganda; the impending rainy season is also expected to further delay the demining programme.

In Pader, the mine action team recently deployed to the district has declared that while there is a low risk from mine contamination, there is a high number of UXOs in the district. During the reporting period, the team recovered 82 UXOs and continues to work with humanitarian agencies to collect information and map information on areas suspected to be contaminated with landmines and UXOs.

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND HIV/AIDS

The Hepatitis E epidemic in Kitgum remains uncontained: as of 30 March, a cumulative 599 cases had been registered, 95 per cent of them in Madi Opei sub-county. Twenty-three cases were registered in Agoro sub-county, and eight in South Sudan. Thirteen fatalities due to the disease have been recorded, giving a case fatality rate (CFR) of 2.3 per cent. Response efforts are focused on the construction of latrines, chlorination of water, distribution of soap, community sensitisation by radio and active surveillance.

Meanwhile, Pader District has been identified to pilot a rapid diagnostic test for malaria, with testing kits to be distributed to Health Centres II and III without laboratory services in order to reduce the prescription of malaria treatments without prior diagnosis. The Ministry of Health is also planning an assessment and long-term river blindness (Onchocerciasis) prevention campaign in the Aswa River belt. Onchocerciasis has long been afflicting populations in Pader District living near the Aswa River: since January 2005, 486 cases of the disease have been treated in three treatment centres. While a Rapid Epidemiological Mapping of Onchocerciasis (REMO) was conducted in Pader and Kitgum Districts in 1995/6, insufficient current epidemiological data on the disease burden in the district, lack of detection and case management skills, lack of access to treatment and stock out of the treatment drug, ivermectin, coupled with inadequate laboratory capacity for diagnosis, inactive vector control programmes and inadequate community awareness and sensitization have hampered an effective response to treating and controlling the disease. District archives show that 14.8 per cent of patients who have undergone eye surgery in two capacitated Health Centres have done so due to ocular manifestations of the disease. The problem may be even larger since victims with non-ocular manifestations would not have presented themselves for treatment nor others, with ocular manifestations, who had not heard about the possibility of surgical treatment.

Human resources challenges to continue to impact health service delivery across the Lango sub-region, although personnel gaps were reduced by the recruitment drive undertaken in the final quarter of 2007. Moreover, quality assurance concerns have begun to emerge over the provision of health services by private service providers in Lira District in the absence of a monitoring mechanism. Against the backdrop of a high incidence of malaria in Oyam District, door-to-door DDT spraying started in the third week of March.

In Moroto, health actors conducted a rapid health assessment of Nabwal resettlement camp, finding prevalent malnutrition, inadequate health services, poor shelter, lack of basic food and non-food items and inadequate water facilities. The camp has no pit latrine, and there is only one borehole located three kilometres away for a population of about 13,000. In another coordinated initiative, cholera outbreak preparedness plans are being developed ahead of the oncoming rainy season.

PROTECTION

Human Rights/Rule of Law: Concern has been expressed over delayed justice for UPDF soldiers on Court Martial in Gulu and Amuru; the court has not sat in over six months. Meanwhile, the major protection challenge in Pader District continues to be the chronic congestion of Patongo Prison. At the end of March, there were 192 inmates in facility with a capacity of 75, lacking basic service facilities.

Agencies in Moroto are supporting the district to ensure preparedness for meeting the needs of Karimojong returnees such as the children forcibly taken off the streets of Kampala. A human rights and humanitarian monitoring training in Kaabong Town Council was held on 27 and 28 March, while a joint monitoring mission to Lopeei sub-county of Moroto District revealed verifiable cases of torture following a UPDF operation on 15 March. The UPDF authorities are investigating the report.

Child Protection: Cases of defilement and consensual sex among minors are reportedly on the increase in Pader due to children being left without adult supervision. Parents often opt to settle defilement cases out of court in the face of difficulties in resolving the cases legally. In response to alleged cases of defilement of pupils by teachers, agencies working on education will undertake sensitization of teachers.

Efforts to address the plight of street children in Lira yielded positive results, with 23 children identified and reunited with their families after having received counselling and access to basic services. To enhance care and follow-up support for reunited children, district officials and volunteers visited Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe to share experiences and challenges with teams implementing similar projects.

Gender Based Violence: In Pader, cases of domestic violence are on the increase, with alcohol consumption presumed to be the major contributing factor. Only one agency in the district is carrying out a

substance abuse project, in just two sub-counties. Domestic violence also continues to be a major concern in Kitgum, where displacement has augmented the problem. In Amuru, increased reporting of GBV cases is attributed to community awareness arising from intensified advocacy and sensitization campaigns.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Average access to safe water in Gulu and Amuru has improved over time, with current statistics indicating 14 litres/person/day in Gulu and 12 l/p/d in Amuru, the situation in return sites and villages of origin remains critical. With the advent of the rainy season, Amuru has initiated a district-wide approach to water quality monitoring and surveillance. Access to safe water also remains a concern in transit sites and villages of origin in Pader District and in the Lango sub-region. Average access to safe water is 12.1 l/p/d in Oyam District and 14.8 l/p.d in Lira. Two thirds of drinking water sources in return areas of Lango sub-region are unsafe, i.e. unprotected springs, rivers or streams.

In Kitgum, access to water was at 14 litres/person/day in main IDP camps (the SPHERE standard is 15 l/p/d) , while the average in transit sites was 14.38 l/p/d. However, the situation in villages of return remains of concern as only 42 per cent of villages have a borehole.

Sanitation and hygiene issues also continued to feature large in areas affected by the Hepatitis E epidemic; key continuing challenges pertain to hand-washing and lack of commitment by the community for well construction. Bucket chlorination is ongoing at all water points in Madi Opei sub-county.

V. SPECIAL FOCUS

JUBA PROCESS

At the end of March, Uganda awaited the signing of the Final Peace Agreement to the Juba Peace Process, originally scheduled for 5 April in Juba, South Sudan. Over the previous months, the pace of the peace talks has accelerated rapidly following the appointment of David Matsanga as chief negotiator at the end of January 2008. By the end of February, agreements on all five agenda items, as well as the annexes on implementation of agenda items 2 and 3, had been signed. On 26 March, the two parties approved the draft Final Peace Agreement to be endorsed at the signing ceremony. However, at the time of writing (11 April 2008), both parties had walked away from the table following delays by LRA Commander Joseph Kony in signing the agreement. The signing was pushed back from 5 to 10 April, and then again to 11 April when Kony requested additional clarification regarding issues related to accountability and reconciliation and the alternative justice mechanisms to be established in Uganda in lieu of the International Criminal Court, which has standing indictments on Kony and two of his senior leaders. Late on 10 April, the LRA chief negotiator announced his resignation; on 11 April the Government delegation returned to Kampala following the release of a press statement, attributed to the LRA, which nullified the previously signed agreements on agenda items 2 through 5 and lambasted the chief mediator, Riek Machar, as well as UN Special Envoy Joachim Chissano, the Government of Uganda and the international community in general.

HUMANITARIAN INDICATORS IN NORTHERN KARAMOJA

The opening of a second field office in the Karamoja region, in Kotido, has enabled OCHA to expand its coverage and coordination services throughout northern Karamoja. The three districts of northern Karamoja – namely Abim, Kaabong and Kotido – continue to exhibit alarming performance against humanitarian indicators. For example, at present, only 20 per cent of the population of the three districts is literate on average, varying from only six per cent of the population in Kotido to 12 per cent in Kaabong to 40 per cent in Abim. The pupil-teacher ratio for Abim is 1:71; for Kotido, 1:90; and for Kaabong, 1:111, while the classroom to pupil ratios for the respective districts are 1:118, 1:76 and 1:93.

Approximately 50 per cent of the population of Abim District, 32 per cent of Kaabong and 33 per cent of Kotido have access to safe drinking water, while respectively only 28 per cent, two per cent and 1.3 per cent of the population has access to safe sanitation. Access to hand-washing at the household level and in schools is reportedly around two per cent.

Across the three 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. Meanwhile, staffing of health posts is at 56 per cent in Abim, 45 per cent in Kaabong and 51 per cent in Kotido, although all together only eight doctors account for those statistics.

VI. FUNDING

At the end of March, the \$398 million Uganda Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for 2008 was funded at approximately 17 per cent, with US\$ 67.6 million in commitments from various donors, including: Sweden, United States, Netherlands, European Commission, Italy, Switzerland, Ireland, United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, Luxembourg, Germany, South Africa and Japan. An additional US\$ 13 million in pledges had also been recorded. Among the best funded areas of work were food security – 32 per cent funded; coordination – 25 per cent funded; education – 17 per cent funded; camp coordination and camp management – 15 per cent funded; and protection – 11 per cent funded. All other areas of work – namely emergency non-food items; governance, infrastructure and livelihoods; health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS; multi-sector (refugees); and water, sanitation and hygiene – were less than seven per cent funded.

VII. THE MONTH AHEAD

MONTHLY CLUSTER MEETING SCHEDULE

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
HNHA Cluster (14:30 at WHO)	GBV Sub-Cluster (10:00 at UNFPA) FSAL Cluster (14:30 at FAO)	CP Sub-Cluster (10:30 at UNICEF) GIL Cluster (14:30 at UNDP)	Education Cluster (09:00 at UNICEF) WASH Cluster (14:00 at UNICEF)	
Heads of Cluster (11:15 at OCHA)		IASC Country Team (10:00 at OCHA) Contact Group* (14:30 at OCHA)		
Protection Cluster (14:30 at UNHCR)				
		Contact Group* (14:30 at OCHA)		

* Contact Group meets every second Wednesday, which usually falls during the 2nd and 4th week of the month.

18 April – Launch of the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Plan (KIDDP) in Moroto.

25 April – Africa Malaria Day

28 – 29 April – (planned) CAP Mid-Year Review Workshop

VIII. CONTACTS

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