

# DREF operation



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Uganda: Food Insecurity in Karamoja

DREF operation n° MDRUG011

GLIDE n° OT-2008-000164-UGA

23 September 2008

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

**CHF 191,839 (USD 182,704 or EUR 117,333) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) in delivering immediate assistance to some 25,000 people (5,000 households) who are in an acute phase of the chronic food insecurity in Kotido and Abim locations in Karamoja district. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

**Summary:** About 33,939 people in Kotido and Abim district in Uganda are currently facing an acute phase of food insecurity. Many parts of Karamoja have been described as chronically food insecure for the past 5 years due to a combination of factors including recurrent drought, over population and declining resource base for agro-pastoralism. In the last few months this has escalated to an acute situation in the Abim and Kotido districts as food security continued to decline and nearly 80 percent of the total population is currently highly food insecure due to three consecutive seasons of poor harvests, depleted food stocks, low livestock production and poor livestock and/or cereal terms of trade related to high cereal prices. Prices of these items have increased between 20 to 65 percent above the 2007 prices at this time of the year.

The region lacks food stocks to take its population through to the next harvest season. Malnutrition rates among children in Karamoja are relatively high with Severe Acute Malnutrition and Global Acute Malnutrition being reported to be at >2 and >15 percent respectively<sup>1</sup>. There are inadequate, response activities being conducted in relation to the current crisis in Karamoja. World Food Programme (WFP) is covering the food distribution and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) covers the seed needs to vulnerable people in parts of Moroto district. As the rainy season is approaching and the seeds requirements, especially in the two districts of Abim and Kotido are not covered, it is anticipated that the problem of food insecurity will escalate dramatically after the rainy season due to lack of food production.

Recognizing that there is a need for an intervention to address the imminent crisis, Uganda Red Cross Society has requested this DREF to support seed distribution to help the households affected by the current acute food insecurity to make the most of the anticipated rains to provide food for themselves in the coming months. At the same time, the branch staff and volunteers will be assisted to conduct a detailed food security assessment in Karamoja area to provide baseline information for the design of a longer term programme to address the chronic food insecurity in the area.

<sup>1</sup> MoH/UNICEF/WFP, Nutrition Assessment, February 2008

5,000 households (25,000 beneficiaries) who are critically vulnerable from Katido and Abim districts will be identified amongst the affected population and assisted with seeds and agricultural tools to enable them to cope with any shock that may come in the future.

The proposed URCS response in the area will take into consideration the needs of the affected population, the level of assistance provided by other actors including the Government (through Ministry of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees). Considerations have been made to develop a comprehensive programme, ensuring a gender sensitive approach. The importance of securing a relief and development continuum will be regarded in the design of this operation.



A prepared land ready for planting in Karamoja district

This operation is expected to be implemented over 3 months starting 20 September 2008, and will therefore be completed by 20 December 2008 ; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation by 20 March 2009.

[<Click here for the DREF budget, or here for contact details, or here to view the map of the affected area>](#)

## The situation

Consequent to drought, floods, crop and animal diseases, Karamoja is currently facing one of its severest food shortages in recent years considered as an acute phase of the chronic food insecurity that characterises the region. The region lacks food stocks to take its population through to the next harvest season and seeds stocks have been depleted by successive poor harvests and hunger.

The prevailing hunger situation has caused family breakages and is solely responsible for the increasing cyclic population movements of Karamoja children, youth and women within and out side Karamoja. Estimates indicate that over 700,000 of the Karamoja population is chronically food insecure. Karamoja region has an unreliable rainfall regime and therefore depends on one major season (April to November) for crop production, the main staples being sorghum, millet, maize, groundnuts and beans. These varieties are cultivated along the Karamoja green belt which stretches from the Northwest to South-western parts of the region. These areas have fertile soils and receive between 700mm to 1,200mm of rainfall annually. The main food availability problems are related to many years of zero production levels in the green belt exacerbated by prolonged dry spell and livestock diseases in the Karamoja pastoral belt.

Extensive dry conditions this year delayed the onset and establishment of the April to September rainy season and hindered crop cultivation in the region's cropping seasons (April to November), with exception of a few locations in Abim and Nakapiripirit Districts. Consequently, District Agriculture Officers report that this has caused poor crop germination, stunting and generally poor crop development. With no rains by July, there is no chance for any meaningful harvests this year, adding yet a third consecutive season of poor agricultural performance in the region (following lower than normal harvests in 2006 and 2007) and heightening fears for the population's food security. High rates of malnutrition have been reported in children with Severe Acute malnutrition and Global Acute Malnutrition rates standing at an average > 2 and >15 percent respectively. Given prospects for the current harvest this quarter, it is likely that high levels of food assistance will be required beyond the next harvest in September/October 2009.

Since the third quarter of 2007 to August 2008, cereal prices (mainly sorghum) have increased by between 20 and 65 percent above normal for this time of year in parts of Karamoja, while bean prices have generally been more than 60 percent above normal. These rising food prices, as well as declining livestock prices observed in the region since the third quarter of 2007, have eroded livestock and/or cereal terms of trade and reduced households' purchasing power for those households owning livestock (**see table 1 below**).

Table 1: Increase in the cost of food in various markets in Uganda between 2007 and 2008

<b>Food commodity</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Current price August 2008</b>	<b>Normal price August 2007</b>	<b>Market</b>
Sorghum	Kg	1,000	300	Abim
Posho	Kg	1,200	700	Moroto, Kotido and Abim
Rice	Kg	2,000	1,200	Kotido/Mororto/Abim
Beans	Kg	1,600	800	Kotido/Abim
Cassava flour	Kg	700	300	Moroto and Kotido
Maize corn	Kg	900	400	Moroto/Abim
Tomatoes	Kg	1,500	800	Moroto/Kotido
Onions	Kg	2,000	1,200	Kotido/Mororto/Abim
Beef	Kg	3,000	2,500	Kotido/Mororto/Abim
Groundnuts	Kg	2,300	1,600	Moroto/Kotido
Goat's meat	Kg	3,500	3,000	Abim/Moroto
Sweet Potatoes	Kg	1,000	500	Moroto/Kotido
Cabbages	A piece	1,200	500	Moroto and Nakapiripirit
Matoke	Cluster	1,500	800	Moroto

Source: Uganda Red Cross Society Rapid Assessment report, August 2008.

As a result, the purchasing power of the people is greatly reduced, forcing them to significantly compromise their food consumption level, both in terms of diversity and frequency. Own production is limited due to lack of agricultural inputs, difficult market purchases and limited coping strategies. Household food access situation has worsened particularly in Agro-Pastoral and pastoral zones of Karamoja. In these zones, there is reduction in the number of meals consumed per day by both children and adults (85 percent have one meal per day). This clearly indicates that there is serious food shortage at household level, owing to limited or no food stock, limited availability of food in markets, leading to adaptation of several negative coping strategies that have serious consequences in terms of nutritional outcomes.

The high incidence of livestock diseases, mainly due to poor livestock body conditions, crowding at limited grazing and watering places, and weather conducive to the spread of disease, has also diminished household income and coping capacities. Specifically, *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR), a fatal viral disease, continues to affect sheep and goats and has resulted in the death of an estimated 550,000 animals or nearly 25 percent of the districts estimated small ruminant population – since it was first detected in early 2007.

## Coordination and partnerships

The URCS intervention to provide seeds and tools to enable affected households to avoid escalation of the food insecurity is complementary to the ongoing food aid programme of WFP. It also anticipates the likely reduction in the scale of food aid distributions in coming months due to limited availability of food stocks.

Uganda Red Cross Society will implement all project activities in liaison with the relevant Government departments (at National, District and Sub-county levels), WFP, FAO and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). At the end of the project period, activities that need further funding shall be incorporated into the Government work plans and budget for support through programmes such as Uganda National Advisory Services (UNAS) and Uganda Red Cross society's 2009 work plan for mid and long term programming.

The East Africa Zone Office will support the URCS, specifically in the design and implementation of a comprehensive food security assessment in the project area.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Uganda Red Cross society has conducted a rapid assessment to quantify the needs in Kotido and Abim districts. The URCS is in a process of developing a longer-term food security project proposal that focuses on Karamoja. Some of the funds requested under the DREF will be used for conducting a baseline survey to provide information for the design of a more strategic food security intervention. This emergency seed distribution is therefore seen as an entry point for the longer term intervention.

## The needs

Assessments conducted by different humanitarian agencies such as WFP, FAO, UNICEF, Central and Local Governments between the period of February 2008 to July 2008 ascertain food insecurity and high

malnutrition in Karamoja Region. Since then, rapid Assessments conducted by Uganda Red Cross Society in August 2008, in Karamoja confirmed that the region suffered as a result of armed conflict, poor infrastructure, drought, and crop and animal diseases and most recently is facing challenges as a consequence of the recent disarmament process. The aftermaths of these shocks coupled with the floods of September 2007 have led to an acute food insecurity situation affecting all the three food pillars of food security; availability, access and utilisation. Furthermore many households have lost their productive assets (such as seeds, tools and livestock) over the last few seasons as hunger forced them to sell assets as a coping strategy.

FAO has planned to provide 12.6 metric tonnes of groundnut seed, cassava cuttings and potato vines, and 250 oxen ploughs to only Moroto District. No agency has however indicated intentions of providing agricultural implements such as hand hoes, machetes, axes, sickles, rakes and cereal seeds like sorghum and maize that are very essential in stemming hunger in the medium term to areas of Abim and Kotido.

WFP has been providing emergency food assistance to the 707,000 people in need since April 2008, marking a substantial increase from the initial 300,000 beneficiaries prior to that time. About 376,000 people determined as the most in need receive a ration covering 70 percent of their daily energy requirement until September/October 2008, while the remainder are receiving rations amounting to 50 percent of their daily energy requirement. If adequate seeds and tools are not provided immediately to those most needy we have to anticipate another poor harvest by end of the last quarter 2008, hence the food security situation could deteriorate to critical levels and additional food assistance will be needed beyond September/October. The seed and tools distribution is required urgently to enable farming households to engage in production during the current second planting season.

## The proposed operation

The three months project will be implemented in the two districts of Abim and Kotido that have a population of 10,600 and 23,339 agricultural households respectively. Of these, the project will target 5,000 households (25,000 beneficiaries) in the two districts as primary beneficiaries. During the selection of beneficiaries for the seed and tools project component, priority will be given to women household heads. This selection criteria is based on the fact that in Karamoja, the women are settled in the manyattas (permanent homesteads) and engage in agricultural productivity, whereas the men and youth spend more time in the grazing land taking care of the livestock.

Along with the seeds and tools distribution URCS will conduct a baseline survey that complements development of a food security project proposal that could focus on enhancing the resilience of the most vulnerable people in the community. The DREF operation could be considered as an entry point to a development intervention that could start beginning of 2009.

## Relief distributions

**Objective 1:** To revive the livelihood options of 5,000 agricultural households, through the distribution of emergency seeds and tools for the second planting season of 2008.

### Activities planned:

- 1.1 Procurement of planting material (sorghum, maize, beans, cassava and vegetable seed).
- 1.2 Carry out community mobilization and sensitization on the project implementation Plan (PIP).
- 1.3 Registration and verification of the internally displaced persons in the resettlement camps.
- 1.4 Formation of Seed Committees at parish level.
- 1.5 Transportation and distribution of planting material to target beneficiaries.
- 1.6 Procurement and distribution of agricultural tools (hand hoes, machetes, axes, sickles and rakes).

**Objective2:** To conduct baseline survey and collect detailed and up-to-date information about the food insecurity situation of the vulnerable people in Abim and Kotido districts.

### Activities planned

- 2.1 Deployment of one food security expert to provide technical support in the baseline (for one month).
- 2.2 Mobilizing staff and volunteers for baselines survey.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out at two levels: at programme level and at community level. The URCS project officers will regularly monitor the programme and visit the areas and supervise work being

carried out. More specifically, monitoring actions including, post distribution, crop performance and post harvest assessments will be conducted. A list of benchmark indicators will be developed which will provide the basis for monitoring and evaluating process and impact. Similarly, the URCS National Headquarters shall monitor the efficient deployment of the project resources and implementation of activities throughout the life of the programme. Monthly meetings to discuss and act on emerging management issues and constraints will be held as required at the district and Community level.

## How we work

*All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

### Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

## Contact information

**For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

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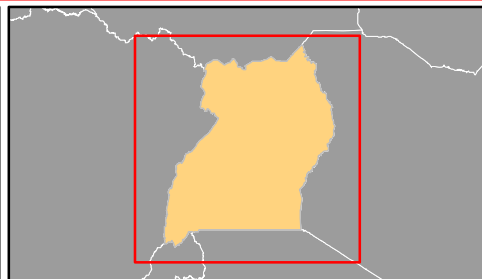
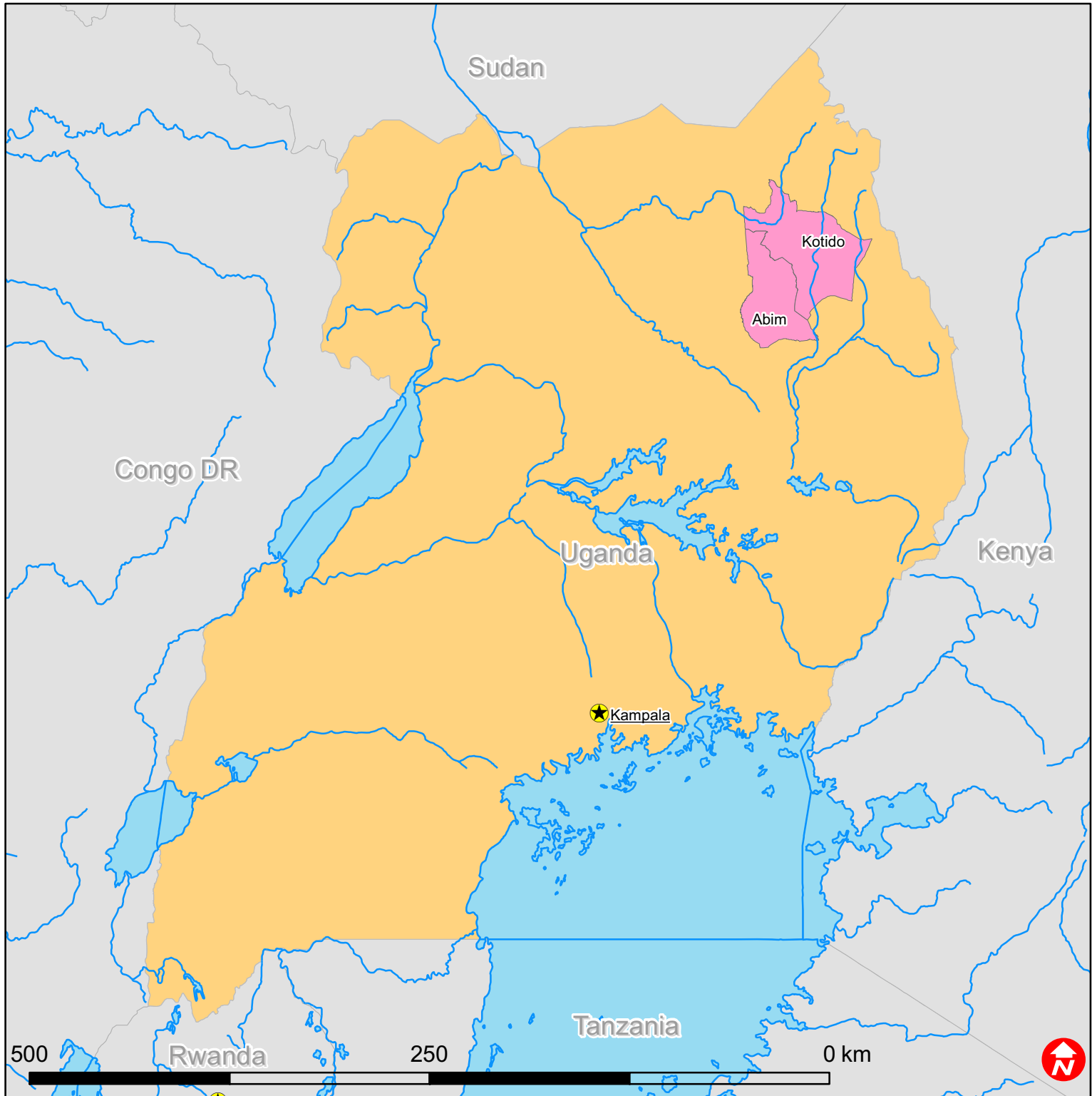
**[<DREF budget and map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)**

<b>DREF OPERATION BUDGET SUMMARY</b>			
	<b>Uganda: Food Insecurity</b>		
			<b>BUDGET CHF</b>
	<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>		
500	Shelter		
505	Construction Materials		
510	Clothing and Textiles		
520	Food		
523	Seeds and Plants		86,667
530	Water and Sanitation		
540	Medical and First Aid		
550	Teaching Materials		
560	Utensils and Tools		56,667
570	Other Supplies and Services		
	<b>Total Relief Needs</b>		<b>143,334</b>
	<b>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</b>		
580	Land and Buildings		
581	Vehicles Purchase		
582	Computers and Telecom Equipment		
584	Office/Household Furniture and Equip.		
587	Medical Equipment		
589	Other Machinery and Equipment		
	<b>TRANSPORT, STORAGE &amp; VEHICLES</b>		
590	Storage - Warehouse		
592	Distribution and Monitoring		
593	Transport and Vehicles Costs		9,619
	<b>PERSONNEL</b>		
600	International Staff		
640	Regionally Deployed Staff		6,200
661	National Staff		2,206
662	National Society Volunteers		12,210
670	Consultants		
	<b>WORKSHOPS &amp; TRAINING</b>		
680	Workshops and Training		
	<b>GENERAL EXPENSES</b>		
700	Travel		
710	Information and Public Relations		3,000
730	Office running costs		1,900
740	Communication Costs		100
750	Professional Fees		
760	Financial Charges		800
790	Other General Expenses		
	<b>SERVICE FEES</b>		
	Service Fees		
	<b>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</b>		

599	Programme Support - PSR		12,470
	<b>Total Operational Needs</b>		<b>48,505</b>
	<b>DREF ALLOCATION</b>		<b>191,839</b>



# Uganda: Food insecurity



About 33,939 people in Kotido and Abim district in Uganda are currently facing an acute phase of food insecurity.

 Affected districts