

UGANDA: FLOODS

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The Disaster

Flash floods caused by the back flow of River Nile into Lake Kyoga have displaced 400 families and left some 2,200 persons homeless in four counties in Lira district as the water level of Lake Kyoga continues to build up rapidly. The cause of this back flow is attributed to the blockage by sudds (debris) of the Nile as it leaves Lake Kyoga to start its journey into the Mediterranean. The Lake Kyoga floods -- which have now spread to Kamuli district -- have created havoc in an area already destabilised by civil war. Insurgency in the northern part of Uganda escalated in May this year.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Disaster Preparedness and Relief department of Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), supported by the Federation and ICRC has sent a team to Lira district with 400 bars of soap, 1,000 blankets and 400 tarpaulins to assist the 400 displaced families. The team will carry out an assessment to determine the extent of the damage, the scope of operations and intended period of intervention. Meanwhile, Uganda Red Cross volunteers are distributing relief items provided by WFP in the sub-counties of Namasale and Awelo. It is important to emphasise the co-operation between URCS, ICRC and the Federation in this endeavour.

Needs

Priority for URCS/Federation will be to provide basic food items and temporary shelter, and also to give disaster preparedness and response training to the Red Cross branch in Lira. Focus will then switch to assisting the communities in rehabilitating housing and helping with the eventual resettlement of flood victims. Finally, public health education in order to prevent, monitor and respond to outbreaks of cholera, dysentery, malaria and other infectious diseases, will be undertaken. Security considerations coupled with difficult terrain and the possibility of outbreaks of epidemics may slow down the URCS/Federation's work.

The local authorities are recommending the integration of relief assistance with long term development. URCS reports that it needs CHF 69,000 for purchase of relief and medical supplies, transport and personnel costs.

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