

UGANDA: SUPPORT TO REFUGEES, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

20 July 1999

appeal no. 01.13/99

situation report no. 01

period covered: 1 January - 30 June 1999

Food distributions and a wide range of other assistance for refugees in camps in south-western Uganda were maintained. Disaster preparedness continued to make progress, with the development of contingency plans, training and input into the government's disaster preparedness policy. Restructuring of the National Society moved ahead; it should be ready to take over some of the delegation's responsibilities in the second half of the year.

The Context

The Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), with support from the International Federation, has been managing a multi-sectoral programme for refugees in south-western Uganda since 1994. The refugees, most of whom originate from the Congo and Rwanda, are living in two camps about 30 kms. from Mbarara Town. One, Orukinga, houses approximately 6,000 refugees from Rwanda, while Nakivale camp with approximately 4,000 inhabitants includes refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Congo and Rwanda. The programme is managed under a tripartite agreement between the Uganda Government, the Red Cross, and UNHCR who co-finance the programme. WFP is providing food to the refugees and contributes towards food distribution costs from the EDPs. No other organisations are present in the two camps, so that the URCS with Federation support is responsible for provision of all services required by the refugees (food, non-food distribution, water and sanitation, health, education and community services are provided, in addition to the logistics support and camp management).

Nakivale camp has been designated by the Uganda Government as a reception camp for any major influx of refugees into the country and the URCS, with Federation support, has been invited to be the lead agency for such an event. A contingency plan for different scenarios has been drawn up and agreed upon by the partners (Government, WFP, UNHCR and the Red Cross).

A Disaster Preparedness programme has been initiated as part of this appeal to provide technical support to the URCS and concerned Government departments, with particular reference to the branches in the south-western part of the country, which may take the brunt of any new refugee influx. The programme, if fully implemented, would enable the URCS to respond with timely assistance to the needs of periodic small scale disasters such as floods, droughts and epidemics.

The URCS is completing a major restructuring exercise and is assisted in these efforts by a Federation Delegation comprising four delegates and a small number of local staff. Besides Disaster Preparedness, the Federation support focuses on finance and administration, logistics and Institutional Development.

Latest events

As the caseload remained stable during the reporting period, (about 1,000 new arrivals were all relocated to other camps), the delegation was able in March to phase out the expatriate presence from Mbarara, thereby significantly reducing delegation costs. The programme itself will be further streamlined in the next few months after a planned inter-agency review. Particular emphasis will be placed on further refugee self reliance. It is hoped that by the end of 1999 the URCS will be able to manage all sectors of the programme, including finance and logistics, with significantly reduced Federation inputs. The URCS programme staff were provided with further training, both locally and in the region, particularly in the technical sectors, in anticipation of the reduced Federation presence and support.

In the DPP sector, the contingency plan for the south west has been updated and extensively discussed with partners, so that Red Cross are now confident they could deal effectively and speedily with refugee influxes under the different scenarios envisaged. Some branches in the region, in particular the branch in Kisoro (major entry point from the Kivus) have been strengthened with the provision of technical support and training. The URCS and Government of Uganda were assisted in the field of DPP policy development and a workshop for all Government departments involved in disaster response and management was organised, with particular emphasis on co-ordination in disaster situations. The URCS, with Federation support, responded to a cholera epidemic in Kampala and a small new refugee caseload in Kotido district was also assisted.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Refugee operation

1. Relief

The tables below give a cumulative picture of all food and non-food items distributed to the beneficiaries during the reporting period. The total number of refugees at the end of June is in appendix 1. It should be noted the number of beneficiaries varies each month, depending on new arrivals and their transfer to other camps. For example, in May UNHCR transferred 772 individuals in 304 families from Orukinga to Kyaka II camp in Hoima district. As a matter of policy, all new arrivals receive assistance but do not figure in the refugee statistics until their cases have been reviewed by the Government. It should also be noted that given the different situation in the two camps not all refugees receive full rations. Non-food items are distributed on a needs basis, in consultation with the partners.

Non Food Items (Kg, pcs. or lorry)

Camp	Soap	Poles for house repair	hoe handles	Blankets	Kitchen sets	Tarpaulins	Buckets	J/cans	Plastic sheeting	Plastic plates	Fire wood
Orukinga	6,763	2,221	430	300	304	306	454	0	0	0	21
Nakivale	400	1,475	0	345	345	1,298	446	114	25	0	2

		repair									
New arrivals & special dist'n in both camps	369	0	40	286	286	548	433	87	314	500	8
Total	7,532	3,696	470	931	935	2,152	1,333	201	339	500	31

Food distributed (Kg) in both camps

Camp	Maize Meal	Whole Maize	Pulses	Cooking oil	Salt	Tea	CSB	Sugar
Orukinga	53,496	319,281	52,850	17,572	0	0	0	0
Nakivale	76,378	225,410	58,466	14,518	0	1,421	2,158	0
Others*	856	11,027	2,552	1,097	7	204	406	14
Total	130,730	555,718	113,868	33,187	7	1,625	2,564	14

* Others: Food for new arrivals, supplementary/therapeutic feeding, medical patients and unaccompanied minors.

2. Community Services

The Community services sector, as can be seen from the tables below, covers income generating activities as well as support to refugees with special needs. Over 1,000 refugees benefited from income generating activities during the reporting period and a similar number with special needs were assisted by different types of intervention under the community services project.

Enrolment

Income Generating Activities	Orukinga	Nakivale	Total number of beneficiaries/trainees
Tailoring	0	18	18
Carpentry	23	16	39
Bakery	13	25	38
Animal Bank	318	368	686
Handicraft	20	0	20
Total	374	427	801

Loans

In kind

Camp	Orukinga	Nakivale	Total
Tailoring	15	3	18
Carpentry	2	0	2
Bakery	6	0	6
Handicrafts	48	36	84
Total	71	39	110

In cash

Camp	Orukinga	Nakivale	Total
	106	98	206

Refugees with special needs

Camp	Vulnerable	Children (0-17yrs)	UAMs (0-17yrs)	Single headed household	Total
Orukinga and Nakivale	732	85	28	300	1,145

*Vulnerable: Elderly(>60yrs), medical patients and handicapped

3. Health

The health services provided to the two camps include both refugees and nationals, as Ugandans from the surrounding villages continue to visit the two centres. Malaria, Acute Respiratory Infections and worms continue to be the main causes of morbidity. There were no major outbreaks of diseases in the past six months. Compared to other refugee camps in Uganda, the high level of attendance at the two centres continues to be a problem and needs to be addressed. It is partially to do with the system of referrals, which is now being streamlined, and the need to improve the management of the fee system, which would discourage patients from misusing the clinics without affecting the overall health level of the population. In order to implement these changes the health staff in the two clinics have been benefiting from a variety of training initiatives and other support.

In close consultation with UNHCR the programme now procures supplementary drugs from GTZ, who have been tasked to streamline the supplementary drugs procurement for all refugee camps in Uganda. The Ministry of Health continued to provide free health kits under their essential drugs programme.

Camp	Refugees	Nationals	Total Patients Attendance	Deaths	Births	Referrals
Orukinga	8,306	5,382	13,688	45	167	141
Nakivale	4,987	3,653	8,640	9	69	90
Total	13,293	9,035	22,328	54	236	231

4. Education

Both Ugandan nationals and refugees continue to benefit from the education programme as pupils and teachers and the Federation/URCS support extends to curricular and extra-curricular activities. Students receive school materials and uniforms; the teachers training and salaries. Enrolment levels remained static, though there are variations in school attendance due to the agricultural seasons and other demands on the children's time.

Small adult education programmes and adult literacy classes continue to be offered in the two camps.

Primary Education

Camp	Refugees	Nationals	Total enrolment
Orukinga	1,225	1,041	2,266
Nakivale	665	398	1,063
Total	1,890	1,439	3,329

Teachers

Camp	Refugees	Nationals	Total number
Orukinga	15	30	45
Nakivale	9	7	16
Total	24	37	61

5. Water and Sanitation

It is virtually impossible to give a cumulative figure for beneficiaries in this sector as nationals have access to the water points but do not use them on a consistent basis. It is estimated that in Orukinga about 8,000 beneficiaries draw water from the project each month, and in Nakivale the figure is about 6,000. In spite of the lake in Nakivale, access to treated water is generally more difficult, hence the large number of Ugandan beneficiaries. There has also been a serious lack of rainfall in the area in the past three months, with many sources drying up. This helps to account for the larger numbers of beneficiaries observed in the last two months.

The provision of a steady supply of adequately treated water has been a major challenge of the project. Since the departure of the expatriate water engineer in March, the Regional Delegation in Nairobi has given technical support. In Orukinga, where the system depends on bore-holes and shallow wells, there were no major problems during the reporting period. In Nakivale, where all water (except rainwater catchment tanks) is pumped from the lake and treated, there have been delays and breakdowns, primarily due to old pumps and heavy algae in the lake, making water production both expensive and slow. This is being remedied now, with the installation of three new pumps and a redesigned system.

Latrine slab production is in full swing and overall coverage continues to improve.

Water

Camp	Beneficiaries
Orukinga	48,000
Nakivale	35,000
Total	83,000

Latrines

Camp	No. of latrines
Orukinga	1,149
Nakivale	486
Total	1,635

Camp	No of shallow wells	No of boreholes
Orukinga	5	5
Nakivale	0	0
Total	5	5

6. Programme Management

Seventy URCS staff are employed by the project in all sectors, together with 144 refugees. The project continues to be managed from Mbarara by a newly appointed, but experienced, URCS programme manager with support from both the URCS Kampala office and the Delegation. The Delegation continued to manage the finances and the logistics of the operation. It is envisaged that in the second half of the year both of these functions will be gradually handed over to the URCS.

Disaster Preparedness Programme

The Disaster Preparedness Programme supported under this appeal has made significant progress in spite of limited resources. The contingency plan to cover an influx of refugees into the south west was finalised and submitted to the URCS partners. The Kisoro and Kabale branches received both technical and material support for better preparedness. A small reception centre for arriving refugees was established in Kisoro and the branch was provided with transport and communications equipment.

In Kampala, the DPP programme responded to the numerous bomb blasts in the city, as well as to the cholera outbreak in early 1999. The Society is an active partner in the disaster preparedness and response mechanism for urban disasters.

The Government of Uganda is currently in the process of finalising a new Disaster Preparedness and Response policy and new legislation addressing the issue is being prepared. The National Society, with Delegation support, has taken an active part in this process and has hosted and facilitated an inter-ministerial workshop focusing on co-ordination in disaster situations. Technical expertise was provided by the Regional Delegation in Nairobi.

Institutional Development

The Federation Delegation in Kampala, with technical support from Geneva and Nairobi, continued to provide support to the restructuring process of the Society and its Institutional Development. Achievements of the period under review include the implementation of the second phase of the restructuring process, the computerisation of the society's accounting system, the introduction and implementation of the vehicle pool system and transport management system, as well as support with programme development.

Outstanding needs

Given that assistance to refugees from the Great Lakes Region no longer figures on the priority list of major donors, the response to this Appeal has been encouraging. Measures have been taken to significantly reduce costs, but there are areas of this appeal that have yet to be covered. In the Disaster Preparedness component of the appeal, the purchase and pre-positioning of contingency stocks has been defrayed, while in the refugee section the expatriate presence in Mbarara has been phased out, thereby reducing the running costs of the delegation in Kampala. Should donor contributions in the second part of the year match the response in the first half, it is anticipated that all the needs of this appeal will be covered. Donors are urged to respond generously, in particular to the Disaster Preparedness component, as the situation in the region is volatile and, despite repeated efforts to secure peace, an influx of refugees into Uganda from surrounding countries cannot be dismissed.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Both the URCS and the Delegation have been working closely with the relevant line ministries. Co-operation with the Office for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, a cabinet rank institution in the office of the Prime Minister, has been particularly close and the Red Cross have been able to make an input into the Disaster Preparedness Policy currently before the Cabinet, as well as the forthcoming DPP legislation. It is anticipated that the role of the URCS will be clearly spelt out in the two documents.

The delegation enjoys full diplomatic status in Uganda and in that capacity is invited to all major co-ordinating meetings, visits etc. Together with the ICRC, the delegation is a permanent observer to the UN disaster management team, and attends the monthly meetings of donor agencies chaired by the World Bank and those co-ordinated by the UNHCR on refugee matters. Co-operation with UNHCR and WFP in the refugee programme has remained excellent, and both agencies are now donors to the appeal. A Reproductive Health Programme for refugees has been agreed with UNFPA and submitted to New York for funding. Lastly, co-operation with the ICRC, which has a large and successful programme in the country, has been very good and mutually supportive throughout the reporting period.

With regard to the media, it is worth noting that both the Red Cross week in May and the regional launch of the World Disasters Report in June have been extensively covered by the local and regional media. A workshop on Changing Climate and Epidemics, organised in conjunction with the WDR launch at Makerere University, attracted many participants from the Government, the media and academic institutions.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The programmes in Uganda continue to run well despite the unsettling effect of the restructuring process on the National Society. The delegation is confident that the refugees will continue to receive assistance of good quality. The URCS, with delegation support, has been able to respond effectively and quickly to small scale disasters in the last six months, in particular the Kampala centred bomb blasts. The restructuring process is on track, and continues to enjoy donor support and confidence.

The second part of the year will be devoted to the continued downscaling of the Federation presence and support, as some of the programming responsibilities, for example in the finance and logistics fields, are progressively handed over to the Uganda Red Cross.

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