

UGANDA: REFUGEE INFLUX

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The Situation

Recent inter-ethnic fighting in southern Sudan has caused a total of some 372 refugees to seek protection and assistance in the town of Kaabong, Kotido District, northern Uganda. Refugees first started arriving at the Ugandan Kawalakol border post on 11 May, and continued in groups of 5 to 10 persons per day. Approximately 368 refugees were registered by the local authorities and escorted to the Kapedo Sub-County headquarters (in transit), and subsequently transferred to the Kaabong Sub-District headquarters on 1 June, 1999. Since then, 26 persons have left voluntarily but there have been further new arrivals, bringing the current total to 372 persons. The caseload consists primarily of elderly men and children aged 6 to 21 years (predominantly adolescents).

The newly arrived refugees are currently residing near the Assistant Resident District Commissioner (ARDC)'s office in Kaabong, where security is more assured. It is anticipated that up to 100 more people are likely to arrive in the next few days, with indications of more enroute.

The government and UNHCR (lead agency for refugees) do not intend to set up a refugee camp in the area, but rather will transport the refugees to Acholipi camp in Kitgum (operated by AVSI).

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

With support provided by the Federation, the Uganda Red Cross Society dispatched a team to Kaabong to assist volunteers and staff from the local branch, and to assess needs. The Red Cross is also assisting in the distribution of relief items and food provided by UNHCR (plastic sheeting, cooking sets, blankets, jerry cans, and soap) and WFP (maize, oil, salt, pulses and sugar). Assistance is also being provided in the construction of a reception centre and 2 pit latrines.

Needs

No further needs have been identified at this time. However, the local Ugandan Red Cross branch in Kaabong, Kotido District may be involved in managing the reception centre.

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