

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS



## ICRC

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## **INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS IN UGANDA**



*ICRC borehole drilling in an IDP camp in Kitgum district*

The ICRC has been active in Uganda since 1979. Following the killing of six ICRC staff members in April 2001 in north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ICRC suspended the activities of its sub-delegations in Uganda. It maintained a reduced expatriate presence in Kampala, concentrating on support to the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS).

Presently, ICRC activities in Uganda are based on the provisions of the agreement it signed with the Government of the Republic of Uganda. This agreement provides ICRC with the frame to assist and protect, according to its mandate, as a neutral, independent and impartial humanitarian intermediary the victims of international and non-international conflict situations, as well as situations of internal disturbance or tension.

In response to the escalating needs in northern and eastern Uganda, the ICRC gradually resumed field activities during 2004, focusing on protecting and assisting people affected by internal armed conflict. Meanwhile, it continues to seek further clarification on the killing of its staff. In this respect, a visit to Uganda by its Delegate General for Africa took place in March 2005.

ICRC maintains regular contact with the different authorities at district level in order to keep abreast of the situation and inform them about ICRC activities. In order to avoid duplication or misunderstanding, the institution is coordinating its activities with the Uganda Red Cross Society as well as with other humanitarian organisations, and is actively participating in the various coordination mechanisms.

In spite of expected peace talks, the civilian population remains apprehensive and the humanitarian situation still poses major challenges in terms of protection and assistance. Internally Displaced

People (IDPs) living in camps suffer from a range of health problems and cannot safely engage in trade, agriculture, hunting or gathering resources such as firewood or local wild food. Diseases such as diarrhoea, respiratory illnesses, malaria and skin infections are common in the camps, and outbreaks of cholera and dysentery are a constant threat. Another major health concern is HIV/AIDS: in the camps in Acholiland (Gulu, Kitgum and Pader), the HIV rate is over twice the national average.

## **ICRC IN ACTION IN 2004 and FIRST QUARTER OF 2005**

Following the gradual resumption of its field operations in Uganda in 2004, the ICRC has steadily increased its field deployment and subsequently its activities. It undertook this with due consideration of the changed humanitarian environment in the country and the specific role played by the Uganda Red Cross Society in the last few years.

### **1. Improving the situation of detainees:**

Following dialogue with the authorities, the ICRC has gained access to civilian and military places of detention, in particular to persons detained in connection with offences against the security of the State in prisons, police stations and military facilities.

The purpose of ICRC detention visits to persons detained for reasons related to treason and offences against the State and acts of terrorism is purely humanitarian. The ICRC regularly monitors the treatment of detainees and their living conditions, and establishes a confidential dialogue with the detaining authorities aiming at improvements in detention conditions.

- In the past ten months (June 2004 – March 2005), the ICRC made 116 detention visits to 55 places of detention and registered 156 new detainees.
  - 34 visits to military barracks,
  - 20 to police stations,
  - 55 to Uganda Government prisons,
  - 4 to police barracks,
  - 1 to a remand home,
  - 1 to an interrogation centre,
  - 1 to a Local Government Prison.



*ICRC delegate visiting prisoners*

- The ICRC continues to facilitate family visits to registered detainees and the condemned:
- In the period concerned, 1.186 families benefited from the family visit assistance programme,
- 1.109 Red Cross Messages (RCM) were collected from detainees,
- 1.015 RCM were distributed to detainees, and 474 RCM replies were collected from their families,
- 22 detention certificates were issued. This is a document issued by the ICRC which simply states that the individual was seen by the ICRC in such and such place of detention at such and such time.
- In December, the ICRC complemented the efforts of the detaining authorities by selecting a few places of detention (Kigo Prison Farm, Mbuya MB, VCCU/ Kireka Police Barracks, Luzira Womens', and Luzira Upper Prisons) where detainees benefited from a small distribution of cooking pots, net balls, ball pumps, baby bottles, shirts, trousers, and mattresses.
- One borehole was sunk in Kitgum Prison at the request of the authorities. The same borehole supplies a nearby school.
- 33 security detainees, who were released, were assisted with transport home and given rehabilitation kits.

Within the limits of its policy of confidentiality, ICRC is actively seeking coordination mechanisms, particularly in the field of assistance, with other organisations taking an active interest in places of detention.

## **2. Tracing activities in favour of refugees**

In an effort to fully assume its tracing responsibilities, the ICRC is conducting fact finding missions to refugee settlements in the south western and West Nile regions of the country regarding the tracing activities covered by the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) branches to support its response to the tracing needs in Uganda and internationally.

Settlements in Masindi, Kabarole/ Kyenjojo, Hoima/ Kiboga, Arua/ Yumbe and Mbarara, were visited jointly with the respective branches of the URCS between June 2004 and March 2005.

As of March 2005, Uganda continues to receive refugees from Sudan, Rwanda, DRC, Kenya, Somalia, Malawi, Burundi, and Ethiopia. With an estimated refugee population of 280,000 (including approximately 200'000 Sudanese), ICRC Uganda participated in a regional tracing meeting where delegates from Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Kenya exchanged information to better address the needs and support to the URCS.

The ICRC has mapped out the resettlement camps that have tracing issues during its joint visits with the URCS Tracing officers as well as with the UNHCR and Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

- With ICRC support, the URCS distributed 3.345 Red Cross Messages (RCM) from and to refugees and families of detainees. It also collected 6.558 messages from refugees and families through its 42-branch network, particularly in the north and south west of the country.

During the reporting period:

- 1.503 RCM were collected for refugees.
- 2.222 RCM were distributed for refugees.
- 42 tracing request were opened
- 25 unaccompanied minors were registered (18 Congolese, 7 Rwandans).
- 4 family reunion were made for 4 Rwandese refugee unaccompanied minors, and

- 11 travel documents were issued.



*ICRC delegate with an URCS volunteer during a family reunion*

### 3. Improving the situation of the civilian population

Civilians and children in particular, remain the main victims of the conflict in Uganda. The killing of civilians, the abduction of children, and the destruction and looting of camps, all cause more and more human suffering.

During 2004, the ICRC sub-delegations were re-activated in Gulu and Kitgum and at the beginning of 2005 a sub-delegation was opened in Pader. **During the period under review the ICRC provided assistance to 711.000 displaced people (142.200 households) in 40 IDP camps in Gulu, 15 in Kitgum, 12 in Pader and 2 in Apac district. More than 48% of the total IDP population in Acholiland received ICRC assistance.**

The situation in the camps is still grave despite ongoing interventions, with health, sanitation and nutrition issues posing a major challenge.

Following a rapid assessment carried out in March 2004, six Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) camps (Padibe, Mucwini, Akwang, Labuje, Kitgum Matidi and Lagoro) in Kitgum district were chosen for a progressive re-launch of ICRC activities. Later, the ICRC extended its activities to Gulu and Pader districts and for some immediate needs also to Apac district.





*ICRC Essential Household Items distribution*

### **3.1 Economic Security:**

#### Kitgum

In 2004, to 6 camps sheltering 23.912 displaced households, the ICRC distributed vegetable seeds, hoes, micro economic parcels and essential household items.

The camp selection was based on the following: all camps at that time entirely depended on food donated by WFP (World Food Program), who provided 50-60% of the required ration, that did not include any vegetables. The IDPs had access to small arable areas around the compounds and camp periphery. Furthermore, other humanitarian organisations had no immediate plans to provide either seeds or Essential Household Items (EHI) to these camps.

On average, 85% of the camp population had access to gardening land near the camp and was able to perform agricultural work. Therefore seeds have been distributed to this 85% of the IDPs, while those unable to work were receiving monthly micro economic parcels.

- In July and August 2004 the ICRC distributed vegetable seeds and a single hoe to 97.400 persons (19,474 households).

*Each family received: 10 g okra seeds + 10 g eggplant seeds + 10 g amarantus seeds + 10 g tomato seeds + 10 g cabbage seed + 500 g cowpeas seeds + 1 hoe.*

After two monitoring exercises concerning the use of the seeds and tools and the performance of the crops carried out in August and October 2004, an impact evaluation was done in January 2005. The aim of the evaluation exercise was to find out the extent to which the vegetable seeds and tools assistance had caused sustainable changes in some aspects of livelihood security such as income, access to food and food quality at the household level of the beneficiaries. The results were:

1. By producing their own vegetables, about 93% of the IDP households had access to an improved diet compared to the previous year.
2. A majority of IDP households had improved their feeding habits by increasing the number of meals consumed per day.
3. IDP households that received and planted the vegetable seeds saw an average increase in their monthly incomes particularly from sale of vegetables.
4. The supply of fresh and dried vegetables in the camp markets increased and was stable from August - December 2004. The prices of the most common vegetables kept dropping according to the progress in respective production months. However, about 45% of vegetables, especially onion and cabbage sold in the camp markets still come from neighbouring districts. There is generally a low supply of staple food crops compared to vegetables in the camp markets and prices are relatively higher.
5. Some IDP households have begun to revive stocking quality seed from their own harvest.
6. With the seed preserved from their own harvest, some IDP households have begun off-season vegetable production along river sides and swamps. This is an indication of shifting towards a more commercialized vegetable production than just the current kitchen gardening.
7. The cabbage seeds distributed have been kept mainly for the more reliable first rainy season in 2005.

The micro economic parcel program was especially designed for the most vulnerable IDPs within the targeted camps. On average, 15% of households in the camps are headed by widows, children, disabled persons and old or chronically sick persons. These people have no possibility to carry out casual labour or grow crops, and have no means to earn an income. The aim of the monthly family parcel was to enable the most vulnerable IDP households to decrease their household expenditures while increasing their income possibilities.

- From August to December 2004 the ICRC did five rounds of distributions of micro economic parcels to the 3,549 most vulnerable households in these six camps. In January and February 2005 these households received monthly soap distribution.

*During 2004 distributions, each family is receiving: 1 kg of salt + 1 kg sugar + 1.6 kg soap.*

According to an impact evaluation, the majority of those receiving parcels have kept the soap, sugar and salt distributed for themselves and have not traded or sold parts of the items. It decreased expenditures for the most vulnerable households, but did not increase their income as anticipated. It greatly helped to reduce the socio-economic gap between households headed by the most vulnerable and the vegetable seed beneficiaries.

- In September/October 2004 the ICRC distributed Essential Household Items to approximately 119,560 persons (23,912 families).

*Each family received: 3 blankets + 1 jerry can of 20 lts + 1 Oxfam bucket + 1.6 kg of soap + 2 cooking pots with lids + 5 aluminium cups + 5 aluminium plates.*

According to the impact evaluation carried out, very little of the Essential Household Items have been sold. This demonstrates that the basic household needs have been well targeted and that these items were needed by the IDP population. The impact on the household economy can be seen through increased income due to water collecting activities (fetching and selling of water 18%, brick production 12%), as well as increased expenditures on clothing, salt and health.

- In February 2005, the ICRC distributed seeds to 213,505 persons (42,701 households) living in 10 IDP camps (the above mentioned camps + Lokung, Palabek Gem, Palabek Kal and Paloga). Seeds were distributed according to land availability.

22,072 households received staple crops and 20,629 households received vegetable seeds.

*Staple crops package: 1 to 4 kg sorghum seed, 0.5 to 1.5 kg millet seed, 2 to 5 kg bean seed, 1 to 3 kg green gram seed and 1 to 2 kg pigeon peas seed + 2 hoes.*

*Vegetable seeds package: 10 g okra seeds + 10 g eggplant seeds + 10 g amaranthus seeds + 10 g tomato seeds + 10 g of kale + 10 g onion seed + 500 g cowpea seed + 1 hoe + 1 rake + gardening and watering tools.*



*An ICRC seeds distribution*

- ICRC is supporting a pilot project in Akwang IDP camp. The program was introduced and explained to the leadership of the camp and to clan leaders. The heads of the most vulnerable IDP households in this camp have been collected into small groups by the clan leaders. Each group is identifying one or more proposals for income generating projects, according to their preferences and abilities. The projects are covering blacksmith activities, bee keeping or the raising of small and highly reproductive animals (such as rabbits, guinea fowl, ducks), which can be sold, and are traditionally consumed by the people.

During the period under review, incidents of fire and cholera outbreaks plus secondary displacements necessitated emergency responses in the conflict area.

- Following fire outbreaks the ICRC assisted 44 families in Kitgum Matidi, 10 families in Amida, 76 in Padibe, 5 in Lokung, and 13 in Palabek Kal camp with Essential Household Items and tarpaulins. For Padibe food donated by WFP was also distributed. 260 families who moved from an ungazetted camp to Orom and Namakora camps were given one tarpaulin to each of these families. Following an outbreak of cholera in Akilok, 413 jerry cans were also distributed.

### Gulu

From September 2004 the ICRC expanded its assistance activities to Gulu District. Following needs assessments the 22 most vulnerable camps, 18 of them previously ungazetted, were served with Essential Household Items.



- This ICRC distribution benefited 91.645 persons (18.329 families) living in the following camps: Alokolum, Awoo, Bobi, Coo pe, Dino, Keyo, Koro Abili, Koro Lapainat, Lacor, Lolim, Lugore, Lukodi, Odek, Omee Lower, Omee Upper, Palukere, Pawel, Tegot (previously ungazetted), Aparanga, Olwiyo, Wii Anaka and Wii Anono.

*Each family received: 3 blankets + 1 jerry can of 20 lts + 1 Oxfam bucket + 1.6 kg of soap + 2 cooking pots with lids + 5 aluminium cups + 5 aluminium plates.*

- Following fire outbreaks in Acet, Amuru (twice), Anaka, Atiak, Awach, Awer, Coo pe (3 times), Cwero, Lacor, Lolim, Lugore, Opit, Pabbo, Palaro, Parabongo (twice) and Unyama, victims were assisted with Essential Household Items and tarpaulins. This assistance alleviated the situation of 3.212 families. For the victims of Anaka camp the ICRC distributed also, food donated by WFP.
- Newly displaced who arrived in Bobi camp received 587 tarpaulins.

Separate from its assistance program, the ICRC has visited all IDP camps in the district in order to identify and select the camps with the greatest needs for 2005 assistance.

- 186.280 persons (37.256 households) received the seeds and tools assistance in Ajulu, Amuru, Aparanga, Atiak, Awere, Bibia, Bobi, Coo pe, Keyo, Koro Abili, Lacor, Lolim, Lukodi 1, Lukodi 2, Olwal/Labongo Gali, Olwiyo, Omee Lower, Omee Upper, Pagak, Palaro, Palukere, Parabongo, Patiko, Purongo, Tegot, Wii Anaka and Wii Anono IDP camps.
- In addition, supporting the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) to respond to a campfire, EHI out of ICRC stock were jointly distributed to 1.610 households.

#### Pader

- At the end of 2004, following a fire outbreak in Atanga IDP camp, the ICRC assisted the 77 families affected by distributing tarpaulins and Essential Household Items as well as food donated by WFP.
- Instances of fire outbreaks increased in the first quarter of 2005 prompting ICRC intervention. 6 households at Pader TC, 40 at Kalenge, 242 at Acholi Bur and 23 at Adilang received Essential Household Items and/or tarpaulins.



*Fire in an IDP camp in Pader*



*and ICRC response*

- The opening of the Pader sub-delegation offered the ICRC further opportunity to expand its agricultural program to this part of the conflict area, where 8 camps have been identified for intervention. In February seeds were distributed to 66.465 persons (13.293 households) in Adilang, Arum, Awere, Lagile, Lapono, Lira Katoo, Lokole and Omot camps.

#### Apac

- A separate distribution of Essential Household Items was carried out to 1.180 households in the Abok IDP camp. In February 2005, 2.812 households in Abok and Acokara IDP camps received stable crops or vegetable seed packages.
- All the seeds distributed were delivered in time, prior to the rainy season. Agricultural training, demonstration plots and nursery training has been conducted.

### **3.2 Water and Sanitation:**

The situation on the ground indicates that the availability of and access to safe water still presents a major problem for people living in most of the densely populated IDP camps. The average safe water availability stands at an unacceptably low quantity and compares unfavourably with the internationally recommended daily standard of 15-20 litres per person per day.

Unfortunately, it has been established that the hydrological environment within Kitgum District does not favour spring catchment or shallow wells because of the high risk of contamination by surface infiltration water or leaking latrines. Therefore, the best option lies in sinking boreholes. While some hand pumps already exist, these are too few to meet the great demands and they frequently break down due to irregular maintenance and repair.

Sanitation is also an issue of grave concern. Children continue to defecate in open areas in spite of ongoing hygiene awareness campaigns. For the adult population, it is apparent that the communities did not welcome the public prefabricated toilets. There is a preference for traditional private or small community latrines (8-10 households per latrine). Provision of digging tools, reinforced concrete slabs and other materials must be made available to the communities to construct traditional latrines.

To complement other humanitarian agencies providing water and sanitation assistance, the ICRC continued devoting most of its efforts to improving and expanding drilling activities with the intention to increase the quantity of safe water availability in some IDP camps. It should be noted that the geological environment, mainly composed of hard rock formations, means that any drilling must be done to a depth of 40-60m before underground water can be accessed, resulting in an inevitable high rate of wear and tear of the drilling equipment.

#### Kitgum

Following geophysical surveys carried out in five selected IDP camps in Kitgum district, some 20 borehole sites were highlighted. During the period under review, the ICRC drilled 13 new boreholes (3 in Akwang, 4 in Labuje, 4 in Mucwini, 1 in Kitgum Matidi and 1 for the prison of Kitgum). In Akwang for example safe water available per person per day increased from 4.4 to 5.8 liters (+32%) leading to a drastic decrease in queues at each water point.

- The special needs presented by the situation in Labuje IDP camp which hosts 3,206 families led to the decision to double the capacity of existing functioning hand pumps there by drilling four new boreholes. As a result, safe water accessibility now averages 13 litres per person per day.
- During this same period, ICRC repaired 16 hand pumps in Potika, Akilok, Orom, Kitgum Matidi, Paloga, Layamo, Lagoro and Mucwini.
- The ICRC is also promoting the construction of additional traditional pit latrines. Communities have built latrines with the material and technical support provided by the ICRC. So far 300 pit latrines have been built in Labuje and Akwang IDP camps.

#### *Cholera emergency response*

A cholera outbreak resulting from poor sanitation and a very low access to safe water occurred in Kitgum's Akilok IDP camp at the beginning of November 2004. The ICRC took the lead role, in coordination and collaboration with the district health authority and the URCS.

- The ICRC responded by rehabilitating and disinfecting the existing functioning and broken hand pumps and by setting up a bucket and jerry can chlorination programme at the main five water sources (boreholes, river, ponds). After two weeks of hygiene promotion to the communities, the people agreed to disinfect their water containers with an appropriate chlorine solution. The quantity of water chlorinated and the daily water consumption in litres per person was increased from 6.1 to 12.6 from all water sources. The chlorination programme was partially extended to another village located at 12 km from Akilok. This chlorination intervention continued up to mid-December with bi-weekly monitoring trips.

#### Pader

- At the end of January 2005, the ICRC started a new water and sanitation program in Pader district. Field assessments were carried out in 7 IDP camps (Amyel, Lira-Cato, Lokole, Awere, Lagile, Omot, and Arum) in order to understand the water and sanitation situation. A hand pump was rehabilitated in one of the IDP camps.
- ICRC rehabilitated hand pumps in Arum and Omot IDP camps.

### 3.3 The sick and the wounded

As observed during the previous months, in Acholi sub-region morbidity rates indicated that the most common diseases by order of priority were: malaria, upper respiratory tract infections (URTI), diarrhoea (both bloody and watery), skin diseases with an increasing number of cases of a fungal infection of gastro-intestinal tract, locally called "*two lango*" and heavily affecting young children.

AIDS Control Program figures indicate that in northern Uganda the prevalence rate among women attending antenatal care is significantly higher (7.8-11.9%) than the national prevalence rate (6.2%).

A cholera outbreak that occurred in Gulu and Kitgum districts between October 2004 and February 2005 (177 cases, 10 deaths) was successfully controlled by the cholera inter-agency task force. Unfortunately in April 2005, 25 new cases were observed in Pabbo and Jengari camps.

As in the past, MSF-Swiss and the ICRC organised emergency stock supplies to be prepared to assist up to 500 potential patients.

The ICRC action on health assistance in Northern Uganda is being carried out taking into account known factors, including the unpredictability of the security situation, understaffing of health facilities and weakness of health authorities in monitoring and supervising health activities in the region. In addition, the Ugandan humanitarian situation requires constant updating and assessment: the ICRC is making efforts to maintain a clear and coordinated position with national and international stakeholders working in health.

ICRC health activities were concentrated in two main components: support to the hospitals and support to health activities in the IDPs camps.

#### A) Support to the hospitals

- In order to contribute to the functional improvement and quality of healthcare provided by hospitals in the region, the ICRC continued the delivery of material assistance (intravenous fluids, dressing and injection material, drugs, gloves, plaster of Paris and suture materials) to the following hospitals:

- Gulu: Governmental Hospital, Lacor Missionary Hospital, 4<sup>th</sup> Military Division Hospital
- Kitgum: Governmental Hospital, St. Joseph Missionary Hospital
- Pader: Kalongo Missionary Hospital

- The ICRC also assisted:

- Orthopaedic Centre in Gulu Govt. Hospital with a new oven for the production of limb prosthesis;
- 5<sup>th</sup> Military Division Hospital in Pader district (Acholpi) with dressing material and fluids.

The ICRC has also sponsored one Ugandan prosthetic/orthotic technician on a course at the Tanzanian Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologists.

- 1.519 victims of gunshots, landmines, bomb blasts and other war-related injuries were supported by the ICRC throughout 2004 to March 2005 in the 3 Gulu hospitals, and 489 in the 3 hospitals in of Pader and Kitgum.

- In order to improve local capacities in managing war wounds and war surgery techniques, a three day seminar was organised by the ICRC in Kitgum. Twelve surgeons coming from governmental, missionary and military hospitals of the 3 districts participated in a training module conducted with the support of the ICRC regional surgeon based in Nairobi.

#### B) Support to health activities in the camps

The ICRC is committed to ensuring that IDPs in the camps have access to basic health care services through existing Health Centres where present, and to strengthening community-based health activities carried out by CHWs and TBAs.

- In Kitgum district the support was carried out in Labuje, Padibe, Mucwini, Kitgum Matidi and Akwang.
- In March 2005, a total of 31.482 children (1-14 years) underwent a deworming treatment with Albendazole. The average coverage rate was 75.7% and was realised in the above mentioned camps plus Lagore (not covered by ICRC intervention).



*ICRC deworming activities in an IDP camp in Kitgum district*

In Gulu and Pader districts, a needs assessment was finalised and the following camps are eligible for a future assistance:

- Gulu: Bibia, Lolim, Tegot, Pawel and Lugore
- Pader: Omot, Lagile, Arum, Awere, Alim and Porogali.

- On average, 18 people are evacuated by the ICRC every month from various displaced people's camps to main hospitals for specialised treatment.
- The ICRC actively participates in the cholera task-force inter-agency and gives logistical support to EPI activities in the region.

### **3.4 Children victims of the conflict:**

It remains a painful fact that children continue to suffer cruelly as a result of this conflict. They are victims in many ways; some have been abducted and conscripted into the LRA, others have lost their families, others have been raped or traumatised in other ways.

- The ICRC is collecting information from ex-abductees in reception centers and IDP camps in an attempt to understand the abduction phenomenon and find out if the LRA show any knowledge of or respect for International Humanitarian Law. Formerly abducted children at reception centers whose families have been traced have been provided with ICRC reinsertion kits.

The ICRC will facilitate the exchange of Red Cross Messages (RCMs) of IDPs separated from their families.



#### **4. Creating a better understanding of the ICRC mandate**

It is important that all stakeholders are familiar with the basic principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), as well as the Fundamental Principles and activities of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

In this respect, the institution has managed to re-establish a working relationship with the Ugandan authorities (political, police, army) and the civil society. Meanwhile, efforts continue to reach out to the LRA with a view to raising awareness about IHL.

The ICRC is conscious of the need to have its mandate understood by both civil society and the governmental authorities. It therefore has carried out dissemination campaigns, spreading basic knowledge about its activities and IHL (otherwise known as the Law of Armed Conflict).

##### For the UPDF:

- The ICRC held a dissemination session with a select media team of the army at the General Headquarters in Bombo.
- A dissemination session exclusively about IHL was conducted at the UPDF Senior Command and Staff College in Jinja.
- Over a three-day period, junior non-commissioned officers undergoing training at the Kabamba Military School in Mubende received IHL and ICRC dissemination.
- The army also invited the ICRC to lecture a battalion strength contingent of its forces that will form part of the African Union peace-keeping operation in Somalia at UPDF 2 Division HQ, Mbarara. The aim was to familiarise them with dictates of International Humanitarian Law and their obligations there under.
- Additionally, an ICRC military specialist from Nairobi arrived in the country at the end of March 2005 and held consultative meetings with staff officers at Army General HQ, Bombo. The intention was to lay the ground for future co-operation in drafting a new syllabus incorporating IHL in UPDF training procedures.

##### For the Police:

- Sections of the Uganda Police Force and Prisons Service in Kitgum also received ICRC dissemination sessions.
- Officer Cadets and recruits training at Kibuli Police Training School were also addressed in IHL/ICRC activities. Like the army, further co-operation for the force is planned in 2005.
- Another meeting was held between senior police officers and the ICRC police specialist based in Pretoria, South Africa, to assess the level of IHL knowledge and implementation in the Police Force. Follow-up workshops have either been held or are scheduled to pursue this matter with a view to have the subject integrated in their training processes.
- Separately, an intensive 7-day dissemination programme was executed for the major police stations around Kampala targeting District Police Commanders, OCs, Special Branch, CID and others.
- A number of dissemination sessions and meetings that led to the sponsoring of participants to conferences in Nairobi, Arusha and Pretoria (about IHL + ICRC activities) took place.
- In collaboration with the URCS, two dissemination sessions were organised: one for the media and university students and one for academic staff of law faculties.
- In co-operation with the URCS, and independently, the ICRC disseminated with regard to its mandate to over 3,000 Local Defence Unit personnel who were in training, the police and operational commanders of the 503 Brigade in Kitgum.



*ICRC dissemination session to the UPDF in Kitgum*



*UPDF senior officers pose for a group photograph after an ICRC dissemination at Kimaka (SS&CC)*

## **5. Co-operation with National Society (URCS)**

Over the past three years, the ICRC directed its efforts toward significant support of the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) by augmenting its financial support, as well as providing more training, materials, logistical and technical assistance. This enabled the National Society to extend its tracing services, provision of relief goods and promotion of IHL and the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Movement, particularly in the northern and eastern areas affected by conflict.

### General Cooperation

The first quarter of 2005 reflected a focusing of the constructive co-operation between the ICRC and URCS. The two institutions initiated an elaborate program known as 'General Co-operation' under which other program costs are better managed and monitored. This unique financial resource management approach is intended to create greater budgeting efficiency in how Coordinators in the previous co-operation areas of tracing, emergency preparedness and dissemination function. The guiding principle for this new program is the Cooperation Framework and Program Agreements that date from the end of the 1990s. It is hoped that in this way coordination mechanisms and ICRC logistics support to the URCS northern Uganda operations, that were developed and employed since May 2004, will be formalized and clarified.

### Emergency Preparedness and Response

The various elements of the "Safer Access Framework" to support and strengthen the work of National Societies in conflict were discussed in depth during a 2½ day workshop in Gulu with the URCS. Besides work on issues like impartiality, neutrality and independence of humanitarian action, the ICRC facilitated an interactive module on security around practical examples such as the collection of relevant information, preparation for a field trip, etc. The workshop provided an ideal forum for a film team from Geneva whose task was to prepare an institutional training video on the "Safer Access Framework".

The 4<sup>th</sup> Appeal Northern Uganda Relief Operation of URCS (NURO) was reviewed in March with the participation of the ICRC. An external consultant and leading NURO staff were also involved in discussing the priorities/main objectives for 2005 and possibly beyond. The review noted the intense cooperation and coordination developed between URCS and ICRC and advocated a further strengthening and consolidation. The main focus of URCS is shifting to basic health/hygiene,

sanitation and HIV/AIDS awareness and other uncovered needs of the most vulnerable or upcoming emergencies, while non-food distributions are to be scaled down considerably. This increases the complementary approach between the two institutions.

#### Dissemination

The URCS participated actively in a "Media Day" organized by the ICRC for around 30 journalists in Kampala. A similar media day was organized by the URCS in Lira in the North a few weeks earlier and attended by over 40 local media representatives. Besides some joint dissemination sessions, ICRC is supporting a wide range of programmes of URCS in this field, including the production of dissemination and information materials such as the quarterly newsletter.

After some time of preparatory discussions, the two Communication Coordinators of URCS and ICRC conducted in March 2005 a joint field trip to the North to concretely assess existing capacities and gaps.

#### Tracing

With the support of the ICRC, the URCS distributed Red Cross Messages (RCM) that helped detainees keep in touch with their families. It furthermore collected and distributed thousands of messages from and to refugees through its nationwide 45 branches and particularly in the north and South west of the country.

## **ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE REST OF 2005**

Given the volatile and unpredictable environment, the ICRC will keep its assistance programmes flexible, in order to adapt quickly to new developments.

### **1. Improving the situation of detainees:**

#### Protection

- Continue a constructive dialogue with representatives of the Defence and Internal Affairs ministries and prison officials, with a view to gaining access to all permanent and temporary places of detention, according to standard ICRC procedures,
- Visit detainees regularly to monitor their treatment and living conditions; make confidential representations to the authorities to bring about any necessary improvements in detention conditions; urge the authorities to respect the detainees' basic judicial guarantees,
- Offer the RCM service to detainees; sponsor yearly family visits to detainees falling within the ICRC's mandate; reunite released detainees with their families,
- Present the penal authorities with synthesis reports on ICRC findings, with recommendations for improvements.

#### Assistance

- Upgrade water and sanitation facilities in 4 selected prisons; through oral and written representations, alert the detaining authorities to the health hazards of inadequate sanitation, and support their efforts to repair sanitation systems,
- Provide ICRC registered detainees with a transport allowance and essential supplies (blanket, cooking pot, soap and hoe) upon release,
- Provide detainees in at least 4 selected prisons with basic material assistance; if feasible, ensure that 4 prison farms have a sustainable agricultural project to improve detainees' diet,

- Support the authorities' efforts to assume greater responsibility for the improvement of health facilities in places of detention and for the transfer of detainees to referral facilities when necessary.

## **2. Tracing activities in favour of refugees**

- Continue to offer tracing services to the approximate 250.000 refugee population in over 8 districts in Uganda (Yumbe, Moyo, Adjumani, Kyenjojo, Masindi, Hoima, Mbarara) in the form of Red Cross Messages, Tracing requests, Certificate requests and providing travel documents when needed.
- In particular continue to monitor the unaccompanied minor refugee population jointly with the URCS by registering minors in the hope of having them reunited with their families.
- Continue to provide ICRC technical assistance and training, as well as financial support to further consolidate the URCS tracing capacity and network in areas where priority needs have been identified jointly with ICRC.

## **3. Improving the situation of the civilian population**

### **Protection**

ICRC will pursue its efforts in order to have parties to the conflict respect civilians, and to ensure that their conduct complies with the basic rules of IHL and, where applicable, human rights law. In this aim, the ICRC will endeavour to:

- Engage the arm carriers in a dialogue and draw their attention to their humanitarian obligation when involved in an armed conflict to prevent violations of IHL.
- Wherever possible to make the necessary representations when violations of IHL have been noticed.

### **Assistance**

The ICRC assistance program aims to improve living conditions of the population affected by the conflict.

#### **3.1 Economic Security**

- Provide up to 61.000 IDP households in conflict areas with essential household items (blankets, jerry cans, buckets, soap, cooking pots, cups and plates) to cover their immediate needs, to prevent further destitution and to improve their living conditions,
- For the second planting season, assist the 57.760 IDP households who were already assisted during the first planting season with technical and agricultural inputs (sorghum, millet, beans, green grams, pigeon peas, sesame, sunflower seeds and hoes) to decrease dependency on general food-aid distributions and to vary their diet,
- For the second planting season, provide up to 68.000 IDP households – those with access to vegetable gardens – with a variety of seeds and tools (tomatoes, eggplant, cabbage, onion, amaranthus, cowpeas and okra) to complement general food-aid distributions, and enhance income generation,
- Conduct an impact monitoring (germination) in April, a crop performance in June and a final impact evaluation in August, together with the regional agronomist from Nairobi.
- Continue to decrease the expenditure and meet the monthly soap needs of 5.000 of the most vulnerable IDPs in 5 camps in Kitgum district.

#### **3.2 Water and Sanitation**

- Repair 50 water supply facilities and install 20 motorized systems to enhance existing water sources in IDP camps,
- Develop new water sources by constructing 50 safe water points,

- Construct 1.000 pit latrines to improve hygiene and sanitation,
- Ensure vector control in 20 IDP camps, dig rubbish pits, drain stagnant water, carry out fumigations and distribute mosquito nets impregnated with insecticide.

### **3.3 The sick and the wounded**

- Jointly with health staff, teachers and Community Health Workers (CHWs) put in place a health and sanitation educational programme (de-worming campaigns, malaria prevention, hygiene promotion and health education against waterborne diseases, STDs, HIV/AIDS, appropriate treatment for most common diseases (early health warning system, safe delivery, ORS distribution, etc).
- Provide the technical and material support, training, equipment and medical supplies necessary to guarantee the functioning of HCs in ICRC-assisted camps.
- Provide medical and non-medical materials to ensure that government hospitals in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader, other selected places and missionary hospitals in Northern Uganda are able to cope with surgical and medical emergencies.
- Organise a training on-the-job on war surgery to enhance the skills of surgeons in conflict-prone regions of Uganda
- Carry out other modalities of support at hospital level (rehabilitation of infrastructure).

### **3.4 Children victims of the conflict**

#### **Protection**

- Urge arms carriers to refrain from recruiting minors aged under 18, in compliance with the 1995 Ugandan constitution and the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child,
- Register all separated children for whom family links have not been restored by other child protection agencies,
- If the children or their families request it, promptly reunite them or re-establish family links.

#### **Assistance**

- Supply assistance packages (containing blanket, jerry can, soap, utensils and hoe) to ease the reintegration of 1.500 separated children into their families together with community health workers and the URCS,
- Carry out hygiene, first-aid and dissemination sessions for children in schools in IDP camps.

## **4. Creating a better understanding of the ICRC Mandate**

#### **For the authorities**

- Develop a communication strategy with clear messages targeting various key stakeholders among the authorities,
- Organize workshops to enhance knowledge among prominent political leaders in northern Uganda of IHL, the ICRC, its mandate and activities and to promote support for the ICRC's action,
- To assist the authorities in the implementation of their pledge taken during the 28<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, namely to domesticate relevant IHL norms.

#### **For the armed forces and other bearers of weapons**

- Through dissemination sessions focusing on protection activities, raise the awareness of UPDF field units of the ICRC's mandate, working methods and activities,
- Familiarize UPDF senior officers at headquarters level with IHL and the ICRC, its activities and *modus operandi*; support the officers in carrying out similar sessions for their field units,
- Support the UPDF in developing a cooperation plan with the ICRC on integration of IHL into the training, doctrine and operations of the armed forces,



- Support the efforts of the armed forces to cover IHL and the ICRC, its mandate and activities in their publication and website,
- Through dissemination activities, familiarize the LRA in northern Uganda with the emblem and humanitarian activities and actors, and promote respect for the emblem,
- Through sessions carried out with the URCS, enhance understanding among civilians of the ICRC's mandate and encourage them to discuss violations of IHL,
- Conduct a workshop to familiarize Acholi leaders with the ICRC, its mandate and *modus operandi* and to gain their support for ICRC activities.

#### For the civil society

- Organize a briefing for editors-in-chief and other senior representatives of the major media outlets; hold seminars to raise journalists' awareness of the importance of portraying the ICRC and its activities accurately,
- Produce promotional material on IHL, the ICRC, its mandate and activities.

### **5. Co-operation with National Society (URCS)**

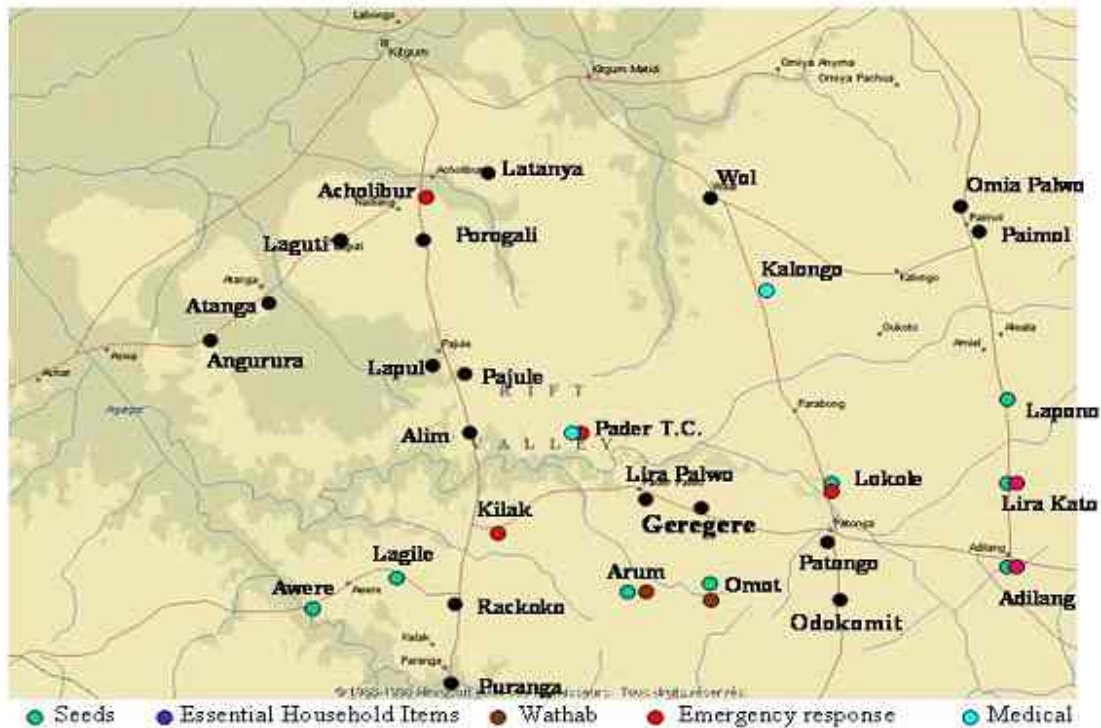
As in the past, the URCS, with its proven capacities and potential, will receive substantial support in 2005. This support will be accompanied by enhanced coordination mechanisms to ensure that the realization of commonly set objectives remains on course.

- Support the URCS tracing department; ensure that the trained officers are able to conduct basic tracing training for volunteers and to disseminate information on tracing activities,
- Encourage URCS staff and volunteers to participate actively and efficiently in ICRC-led assistance operations, and enhance their skills through training,
- Provide the URCS with the requisite material and logistical support to enable it to provide timely emergency assistance,
- Through technical assistance, enable the URCS to disseminate basic norms of IHL and conduct ad hoc sessions for target populations,
- Regularly review coordination between the URCS, the ICRC and Movement partners,
- Together with the URCS, participate in Movement coordination efforts in order to reaffirm the ICRC's lead role and specific mandate in the Movement's action in response to conflict,
- Consolidate cooperation with the National Society through coordination mechanisms such as monthly meetings.

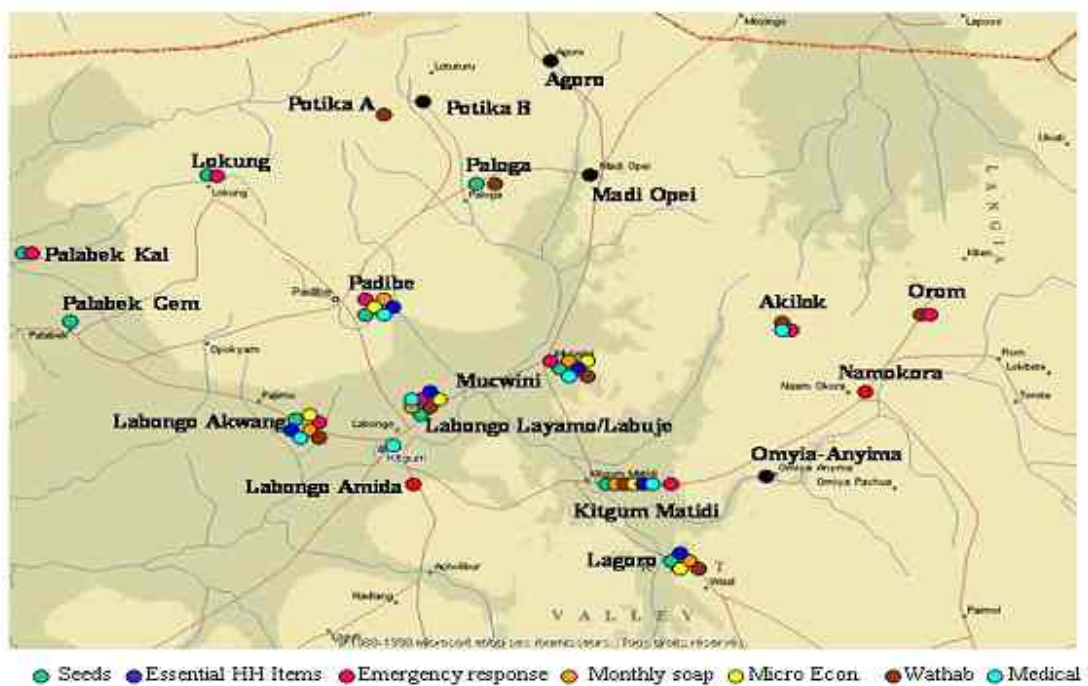
**April 14, 2005**

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### **2004 / 2005 PADER DISTRICT ICRC ACTIVITIES**



## 2004 / 2005 KITGUM DISTRICT ICRC ACTIVITIES



## 2004 / 2005 GULU DISTRICT ICRC ACTIVITIES

