

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS



## ICRC

### ACTIVITIES UPDATE October – December 2005



ICRC dissemination to UPDF, Kitgum

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## **ICRC UGANDA, FOURTH QUARTER 2005**

The ICRC's field activities in Uganda focus on the north. Since 1984, the organization has assisted some 800,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in 78 camps in northern Uganda, under its mandate as a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian intermediary in armed conflict.

The ICRC assists and protects victims of armed conflict, internal disturbance and tension. It also works with the authorities to promote international humanitarian law (IHL) within Uganda's armed and police forces. Under a 1987 agreement with the Ugandan government, the ICRC visits military and civilian detention facilities to monitor conditions. It maintains close contact with the Ugandan authorities to keep them abreast of ICRC activities in the country, some of which it undertakes in conjunction with the Uganda Red Cross Society.

The vast majority of the population in the affected districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader (and to some extent, the sub-region of Lango) are living in IDP camps. Unable to engage in normal socio-economic activities, they face significant health, hygiene and nutritional problems. In addition, the high level of insecurity, coupled with the risk of abductions and attacks on camps, has left many of them seriously traumatized.

In the last quarter of 2005, ICRC field operations suffered from uncertainty related to security incidents that occurred during late October and early November in northern Uganda. The organization responded with additional awareness-raising activities, in which it explained and emphasized the principles and mandate of the ICRC and its Movement partners.

In the interests of good coordination, the ICRC maintained regular contact with several humanitarian agencies, both in Kampala and in the field.

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

The ICRC monitors material and psychological conditions of detention. Working confidentially, through regular dialogue with the detaining authorities (prisons, police and military), it made regular visits to people held in relation to the conflict in northern Uganda, those suspected of terrorism and those suspected or accused of treason and other offences against State security. The aim of these visits is to ensure that detainee treatment meets international standards. The ICRC also ensures that detainees can maintain contact with their families via Red Cross messages (RCMs) or visits from members of their families.

The ICRC met the new Chief of Military Intelligence and the new Inspector General of Police to reiterate its mandate, particularly regarding detention.

Between October and December, the ICRC made 29 visits to 25 places of detention, of which four were military facilities. It followed up on 147 detainees, distributed 150 RCMs and facilitated 132 family visits. The ICRC assisted detainees in some cases, supplementing the efforts of the authorities.

In Luzira Upper, Kigo, Arua and Gulu prisons, the ICRC continued to give technical and material support to vegetable gardens. The first harvest has already meant that detainees eat vegetables more regularly. The aim is that the authorities ensure the project's sustainability, so that vegetables enhance the prisoners' diet throughout the year.

Limited resources continued to limit the ability of prison authorities to meet basic international agreed standards on conditions of detention. The ICRC suggested to the prison authorities the carrying out of a joint assessment of the infrastructure of 10 prisons. On the basis of that assessment, it will be possible to decide what renovation work should have top priority in 2006. The assessment will also serve as a basis for the prison services to seek the necessary funding.

The ICRC also proposed the carrying out of a joint nutritional assessment in 2006.

### **2. Refugee-related tracing activities**

The ICRC is supporting the Uganda Red Cross Society's tracing and family news programme for those separated due to armed conflict. In the last quarter of 2005, the Red Cross Movement distributed 1,164 Red Cross messages and collected 2,019, mainly for refugees from Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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

#### **3.1 Protecting civilians**

The ICRC verifies that combatants and other bearers of arms treat the civilian population in accordance with international humanitarian law. When breaches of IHL occur it makes confidential representations to the authorities responsible, with the aim of improving the behaviour of the group concerned and its respect for civilians, and alleviating the plight of those who have suffered abuse.

The ICRC visits minors in Child Protection Units and rehabilitation centres to assess their needs.

### **3.2 Water and sanitation**

The ICRC's water, sanitation and habitat programmes provide victims of armed conflict with safe water for drinking and other domestic uses. They boost hygiene, protecting people from water-borne diseases.

In the last quarter, ICRC drilled three boreholes in two areas, benefiting 29,676 people, and supported the construction of 1,125 traditional latrines in five IDP camps. Each latrine serves 30 people.

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

ICRC health programmes aim to ensure that IDPs in the camps concerned (some 280,000 people) have access to essential preventive and curative health care of universally accepted standards through the existing health services (hospitals and health centres) and effective community-based activities. The ICRC helps those services to apply the minimum Primary Health Care package, implement the Enlarged Programme of Immunization and Maternal and Child Health and control most communicable diseases.

Support includes training of health staff, ad hoc provision of medical consumables (drugs, surgical kits, etc.) and equipment, plus renovation of infrastructure. Community health education and hygiene promotion activities take place in IDP camps. The ICRC has also been carrying out an average of between 16 and 17 medical evacuations per month from camps to referral hospitals in northern Uganda. The organization runs its health programmes in cooperation with the district health services, in partnership with the Uganda Red Cross and with the support of Community Owned Resource Persons (CORPS).

During the last quarter, the six ICRC-supported hospitals between them:

- o assisted 59 war casualties;
- o performed over 1,000 surgical operations;
- o admitted 6,000 inpatients;
- o held approximately 75,000 outpatient consultations.

The ICRC launched an anti-malaria campaign, starting with the distribution of insecticide-treated nets to 40,000 households in over 15 camps (one per household), primarily to children and pregnant women.

### **3.4 Economic security**

The ICRC helps vulnerable people in IDP camps by providing emergency relief and distributing es-

sential household items (blankets, jerrycans, soap, cooking pots, buckets, aluminium cups and plates), farm implements and seed.

The ICRC has set up small-scale livestock-breeding projects so people in the areas affected can generate an income. In the period under review, 439 vulnerable households (2,400 people) benefited from this assistance.

The aim of the 2005 agricultural support programme was to make more food available to IDPs in selected camps in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts. For the first rainy season, the ICRC provided seed (millet, sorghum, pigeon peas, green gram, beans for those having access to more than 0.5 acres of land and vegetable seed for those with less than 0.5 acres) and tools. For the second rainy season, those with access to more than 0.5 acres of land received sesame and sunflower seed and tools, while those with less than 0.5 acres received vegetable seed and tools for a second planting campaign. While a definitive analysis will only be available in early 2006, initial findings following the harvests from the second rainy season indicated that the success of the campaign had been consistent with an average year; i.e., rainfall pattern allowed for normal yields.

In northern Uganda, fires are common during the dry season (November-March), and many households in IDP camps suffered the effects. The ICRC provided emergency aid to victims of these incidents, following assessments of needs. The organization distributed essential household items (jerrycans, buckets, cups, cooking pots, soap and blankets), plus tarpaulins where no traditional roofing material was available.

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

The ICRC continued to promote respect for and implementation of international humanitarian law (also known as the law of armed conflict) in Uganda's police force, armed forces and law faculties. The organization discussed with the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and the Uganda Police Forces (UPF) progress on implementing the *Memoranda of Understanding (MoU)*, covering the creation of pools of qualified trainers within the UPDF and the UPF. The ICRC and the Ugandan government had signed the MoU in September.

The UPDF had made considerable progress towards approving a plan of action for the "train the trainers" programme scheduled to start in January 2006. A ministerial directive requiring all army

training schools to teach IHL had been prepared and was awaiting signature. The police had yet to develop a similar plan of action. Staff in all ICRC sub-delegations (Gulu, Pader, Kitgum) used every opportunity to disseminate information about IHL and the ICRC, particularly to the armed forces and communities in IDP camps.

#### **4.1 Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF)**

The ICRC sponsored two UPDF officers to attend the IHL course in San Remo, Italy. Three other officers attended the first ICRC Law of Armed Conflict competition for armies, held in Kigali, Rwanda. The competition attracted six East African countries that will be sending troops to the African Union's East Brigade peace-keeping force.

At Kabamba Training School, 263 junior non-commissioned officers attended a session on IHL, the ICRC's mandate and its work.

#### **4.2 Uganda Police Forces (UPF)**

One police officer attended the IHL course in San Remo thanks to ICRC sponsorship. It was the first time a Ugandan police officer had attended this purely military course. His participation is expected to boost the "train the trainers" programme.

#### **4.3 Universities**

The ICRC continued to promote the teaching of IHL, mainly to professors and students from Uganda Christian University, Mukono. Two professors from Mukono and one from Makerere Law Faculties attended the ICRC IHL teaching training course, in Pretoria.

One law students' team from Makerere and one from Mukono attended the fifth IHL moot court competition in Arusha, Tanzania. They received lectures from ICRC specialists and from officials of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

#### **4.4 Civil society**

The ICRC, in coordination with the Acholi Paramount Chief, held a session in Gulu for Acholi elders and chiefs from across Acholiland, to explain the ICRC's identity and its relationship with IHL.

#### **4.5 Political authorities**

The ICRC met 22 representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a session on IHL implementation and ICRC advisory services to governments. Work continued on establishing an inter-ministerial IHL committee to tackle domestication of IHL treaties and conventions.

The ICRC met the Uganda Law Reform Commission and the Directorate of the First Parliamentary Counsel/Legislative Drafting of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, to find avenues for cooperating on IHL implementation. The ICRC Advisory Services gave detailed information to both institutions on banning anti-personnel landmines (as required by the 1997 Ottawa Treaty) and child soldiers, after learning that they would be working on those issues.

#### **4.6 Media**

Contact with key media continued, keeping them abreast of the ICRC's humanitarian work in Uganda and worldwide.

#### **4.7 Arms bearers**

The ICRC continued to promote its impartial and neutral work to all arms bearers, using the media and a range of other channels.

### **5. Cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS)**

The ICRC continued to provide significant technical and financial support to the URCS for its programmes in the areas of emergency preparedness and response, tracing and dissemination. A partnership meeting in October brought together the British, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish Red Cross Societies, the Federation and the ICRC. The URCS' main partners discussed prospects for 2006 and beyond, the ICRC and the Danish Red Cross remaining the major contributors to the Society.

The URCS and the ICRC discussed the complementary hygiene/sanitation programmes on which the ICRC wishes to focus in camps in northern Uganda during 2006. Two URCS Gulu volunteers were appointed permanent focal persons for health and hygiene promotion. The ICRC provided training and financial support to 55 Community Owned Resource Persons who had been involved in the cholera response campaign in Pabbo camp since August.

There is close cooperation between the Northern Uganda Relief Operation (NURO), the Danish Red Cross/ECHO and the ICRC regarding operations in the north of the country. As a result, URCS/NURO and the ICRC continued to work closely together at field and Kampala levels following the security incidents affecting NGOs in the north at the end of October.

## THE ICRC IN NORTHERN UGANDA

Ugandan and expatriate staff are working at the ICRC sub-delegations in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader. The following pages summarize the main achievements of each sub-delegation.



ICRC detention visit, Kampala

### **GULU DISTRICT**

#### ***Improving the situation of detainees***

The ICRC plans to connect the prison drains in Gulu Government Prison to the town sewerage system. The organization has already provided medicines, blankets, mats, jerrycans, cups, plates and games.

To enhance detainee health provision, two members of the medical staff of Gulu Government Prison and five from Gulu Police Station attended ICRC training aimed at improving their skills in the diagnosis and treatment of STDs, malaria, respiratory infections and skin diseases.

The ICRC agronomist visited the government prison to follow up on earlier agricultural assistance. Vegetables from the first harvest had been added to the detainees' diet. It was still difficult to provide sufficient water during the dry season, but vegetable growing was to continue.

#### ***Protecting civilians***

The ICRC continued its regular IDP camp visits to monitor combatants' compliance with IHL as it affects civilians. The organization also visited the Gulu Child Protection Unit.

#### ***Economic security***

During the last quarter, five IDP camps (Bibia, Pagak, Parabongo, Patiko Ajulu and Purongo) received basic household items from the ICRC. A total of 9,354 households (50,000 people) benefited.

At the end of September, the ICRC started evaluating the agricultural programme carried out in 18

IDP camps in Gulu District and two in Apac District. The programme had involved some 40,500 households (220,000 people). Initial, provisional analysis indicated that food prices had fallen on those markets where ICRC input had yielded good results, such as in Bibia and Pagak IDP camps. The final results of the 2005 agricultural support programme are expected in early 2006.

#### ***Emergency support***

Parabongo suffered storm damage in October. The ICRC, in coordination with UNICEF, distributed 1,100 tarpaulins. The organization also helped fire victims. Between October and November, the ICRC assisted 108 households (900 people) in Bobi IDP camp and 41 households (220 people) in Pagak, Koro Abili, Koro Lapainat and Parabongo.

#### ***Water, sanitation and hygiene***

In cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross, the ICRC carried out hygiene and sanitation education sessions in Pabbo camp (54,160 people) in response to the cholera epidemics. The construction of 200 latrines is under way in Pabbo.

In December, ICRC began motorization of a borehole in Pabbo to increase the volume of water. Another borehole will be set up in Amuru camp. Each will supply an average of 10,000 people.

#### ***The sick and wounded***

The ICRC held health education sessions on malaria and the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets in Bibia, Palaro, Lugore, Tegot, Lolim and Pawel IDP camps and 4,400 households received one net each. The organization trained health workers from Palaro and Lugore camps in the efficient use of essential drugs, plus treatments for common illnesses.

The security situation changed at the end of October, which meant that the ICRC health team operated mainly in Pabbo camp. The hygiene education programme to prevent cholera in Pabbo had good results. The programme started in July, and by December only five suspected cholera cases had been reported, compared with 240 cases in December 2004. The ICRC continued to provide intravenous fluids, drugs, surgical equipment, dressings and medical supplies to the 4th Division Military Hospital, Gulu Regional Hospital and St Mary's Lacor Hospital.

During the last quarter, ICRC transported the following casualties to referral hospitals (Government, Lacor, 4th Division and Anaka): wounded soldiers, civilians injured in a shooting

incident in Lalogi camp and other civilians injured in a car accident near Keyo IDP camp.

***Creating a better understanding of the ICRC's mandate***

The ICRC held two-day dissemination sessions for 236 non-commissioned officers from various units of the UPDF 4th Division. They learnt about the Red Cross Movement, the ICRC, its activities and IHL.



ICRC health education campaign, Gulu

## **KITGUM DISTRICT**

### ***Improving the situation of detainees***

The ICRC renovated a hand borehole pump in Kitgum Government Prison. The pump supplies safe water for the prison itself, the primary school at the prison and a few individual nearby.

### ***Protecting civilians***

During the last quarter, the ICRC continued visiting IDP camps to monitor the behaviour of arms bearers towards the population.

### ***Economic security***

The main task during the last quarter of 2005 was to evaluate the ICRC's agricultural programme, (provision of seed and tools) which had covered 43,000 households (236,000 people) in Mucwini, Akwang, Palabek Gem, Palabek Kal, Paloga, Kitgum Matidi, Padibe, Labuje, Lagoro and Lokung IDP camps. More rain fell in the east of the district than the north and west, and this may have reduced harvests in Palabek Gem, Palabek Kal and Lokung camps, which are in the northwest. Final results are expected in early 2006.

In Akwang IDP camp, the pilot income-generating project (breeding of poultry and rabbits) recorded its first success, as rabbits and ducks started reproducing. The first replication of the project will benefit approximately 1,000 further households (5,500 people) in Mucwini IDP camp. Vulnerable people in Kitgum Matidi, Lagoro, Labuje, Mucwini and Padibe camps (4,000 households, or 22,000 people) received monthly soap rations. This enabled those people to allocate their (meagre) resources to essential needs, and the ICRC will continue to provide them with soap during 2006.

### ***Water, sanitation and hygiene***

The ICRC started assessing water and sanitation situation in 12 IDP camps, with a view to discussing possible action. The assessment covered Mucwini, Labongo Layamo, Pajimo Akwang, Orom, Ogili, Agoro, Omiya Anyima, Nam Okora, Potika B, Paloga, Akilok, and Oryang. The total population of these camps is 157,609.

Borehole drilling operations continued at Madi Opei IDP camp, with two more boreholes completed, bringing to four the number of successful boreholes. Between them, these will benefit 12,989 people. The ICRC successfully completed another borehole at Potika A, home to 5,132 people. The organization also repaired a hand pump at Amida IDP camp (8,500 people) and another at Kitgum High School (average of 1,000 people). The ICRC delivered roofing materials for the construction of 925 pit latrines at Kitgum Matidi,

Mucwini, Amida, Madi Opei, Padibe and Akwang camps that will benefit over 46,250 people.

### ***The sick and wounded***

The ICRC made regular visits to the health clinics at Kitgum Matidi, Mucwini, Labuje, Padibe, Akwang and Lagoro camps, to follow up implementation by local health workers of the guidelines on clinical standards. The organization delivered drugs, medical supplies and disinfectant solutions, and introduced the standard protocols for their preparation and use.

Four Uganda Red Cross volunteers took part in malaria awareness-raising sessions before the ICRC distributed insecticide-treated mosquito nets in Padibe, Awere, Labuje, Akwang, Lagoro and Kitgum Matidi camps. The organization distributed 23,475 nets (one per household), primarily to pregnant women and to children under five. After ICRC training, Community Owned Resource Persons were assigned to report on vital registration (births and deaths) and on major public health concerns in six IDP camps.

The ICRC funded the construction of Labuje health centre, which will provide care to 19,500 people living in the camp, and supplied furniture and drugs to Padibe health centre pharmacy, which serves 54,324 people. The organization supplied Kitgum District Direction of Health Services with 8,000 albendazole tablets, cotton wool and logistics to support a deworming campaign, part of the Child Day Initiative. The ICRC also provided intravenous fluids and medical supplies for a surgical camp run by the Ministry of Health in Kitgum Government Hospital. During the last quarter, ICRC transported 17 cases (five children, eight women, four men) with severe malaria, acute dehydration or car accident injuries to referral hospitals (Government and St Joseph).

### ***Creating a better understanding of the ICRC's mandate***

The ICRC held a session on rules of behaviour in combat at Akilok camp for 20 frontier guards.



The ICRC drilling a borehole at Kitgum

## **PADER DISTRICT**

### ***Improving the situation of detainees***

The ICRC visited places of detention in Lira and Pader districts. In Lira Government prison, the ICRC provided sleeping mats, blankets, cooking pots, jerrycans, hoes and soap to the dispensary, together with games.

### ***Protecting civilians***

During the last quarter, the ICRC continued visiting IDP camps to monitor the behaviour of arms bearers towards the population.

The ICRC visited the child reception centre in Pader to interview formerly abducted children and participated in regular child protection meetings to map out areas of operation by different agencies.

### ***Economic security***

The ICRC started evaluating its agricultural programme in Arum, Lokole and Awere IDP camps. The programme had provided 14,600 households (over 80,000 people) in nine IDP camps with seed and tools.

### ***Emergency support***

Fires broke out on several occasions in Pader Town Council and other IDP camps. The ICRC provided essential household items (jerrycans, buckets, cups, cooking pots, soap and blankets), plus tarpaulins, assisting 276 households (1,500 people).

### ***Water, sanitation and hygiene***

The ICRC repaired a hand pump at the Pader Health Centre.

As part of the hygiene promotion programme, the ICRC supplied materials for latrine construction to Porogali, Alim and Geregere IDP camps. The latrine programme in the district has seen the construction of 143 units, benefiting 7,150 people.

### ***The sick and wounded***

Relief activity was greatly constrained in the latter half of this quarter, due to security problems. In the period up to early November, the ICRC managed to provide 8,725 households in Omot, Lagile, Arum, Porogali, Alim and Awere IDP camps with insecticide-treated mosquito nets (one per household), primarily for pregnant women and for children under five.

In October, the ICRC provided training in the promotion of health and hygiene to 10 hygiene

promoters and community health workers in Awere and Lagile IDP camps.

In Acol Pii health clinic, the ICRC supplied the maternity unit with mattresses, mattress covers, disinfectants and other health items.

The ICRC transported the body of a young boy drowned in the River Agago to Patongo health centre, gave immediate assistance to victims of an ambush on the Pajule-Pader road and helped the medical team of Pader health centre to deal with the casualties of an ambush on civilian vehicles, which left almost 20 dead.

### ***Creating a better understanding of the ICRC's mandate***

In response to a request, the ICRC conducted a workshop on IHL for 26 officers of the UPDF's 601 Brigade, 5th Division.



ICRC distributing mosquito nets, Pader