

Alert note***Uganda-Drought in Karamoja
1st August 2022.*****Completed by:** Ms. Josephine Ninsiima (CoU)**Date completed:** 1st August 2022**Forum:** ACT Uganda forum**Type of emergency:** Acute hunger and prolonged Drought**1. The nature of the emergency**

Karamoja, located in the northeast, is one of the poorest regions in Uganda, with income poverty at 66% (having increased from 61% in 2017) and food poverty at 75% (having increased from 70% in 2017) (UBOS: UNHS 2019/20). The population is rural, with livelihoods based on livestock and crop production, and recently a growing range of diversified livelihood activities that include mining, stone quarrying, and sale of natural resource products, among others. The region continues to have the highest food insecurity and malnutrition levels in Uganda due to factors related to inadequate food access, poor dietary diversity, structural poverty, low-value livelihood options, poor hygiene and sanitation, and morbidity. The region comprises four livelihood zones i.e., Sorghum- Livestock Zone, Maize-Livestock Zone, Mixed Crop Zone, and Apiary-Potato Zone.

This year, the Karamoja region has suffered widespread crop losses and harvest failure due to delayed rains resulting in hunger due to several factors. The area is suffering a prolonged drought since 2020. The hunger situation is made worse by attacks from plagues of locusts and armyworms all of which have affected crop production in the region during the past 2 years. In addition, elephants have also ravaged food crops due to the drought experienced at Kidepo national game park. There have also been noted incidences of insecurity in the region and cattle raids by armed cattle rustlers have continued to leave affected households vulnerable as farmers choose to work only in nearby gardens and ignore their farms farther away where they risk insecurity. As a result, food production in the area has decreased. Food prices have also increased due to an economic crisis in Uganda currently.

Karamoja region in Uganda has been affected, with the most affected districts being the Districts of Moroto, Napak, Koboong, and Kotido. The acute food shortage in the region is leading to severe food insecurity making it a large-scale emergency. The whole Karamoja region is food insecure with the worst-hit districts being Moroto, Kotido, Koboong, and Napak.

According to the report from the District Disaster Management Committee for Koboong, from January - Mid July 2022, the district has recorded a total of 692 deaths spreading out in all the 19 sub-counties in the region while Kotido District specifically in the two (2) Sub counties of Kapeta and Napumpum, the district has registered 66 deaths, 16 and 50, respectively. This is not inclusive of the other 17 sub-counties as the District Disaster Management Committee had not done an assessment yet at the time of the assessment. "The whole district is affected, and everyone is hungry," Hon Loke Paul Komul (Local Council Five -District Chairperson) Kotido emphasized.

During the last five months, five of the nine Karamoja sub-region districts fell under the ALARM drought early warning (DEW) phase classification in June 2022. The five districts of Moroto, Amudat, Abim, Kotido, and Kabong have experienced low supplies of staple foods at a higher price in their markets compared to previous months and years.

The agriculture sector suffered multiple threats following an African Armyworm infestation and ongoing insecurity that resulted in less land area being planted. (Source: National Emergency Coordination and Operation Centre June Bulletin: NECOC JUNE published 18th July 2022. <https://www.necoc.opm.go.ug/KDEWS-Jun2022.php>.)

The most affected have been children under 5 years, women, children headed households, the elderly, schools, and people with special needs. Cases of severe acute malnutrition have also been reported in all the districts with children as the most affected.

The United Nations Central Emergency Response has issued an alert on the situation in the region. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1155648/?iso3=UGA>.

2. The impact and scale of the emergency

Children below 5 years have been most affected, and the malnutrition rate is at 19.7% according to the Community Development Officer for Kotido District Mr.Ojok Jimmy Ayen. Child-headed families, orphans, and disabled children are also affected, and this has resulted in an increase in child labor in search of food. School meals are encouraging younger children who would normally not be in the school environment to attend school with their older siblings, causing overcrowding and negatively affecting the learning environment.

Women

In Karamojong, women (who are often the breadwinners) have been left vulnerable. In cases where the woman can no longer provide, the men leave or marry a second wife as a means of survival causing increased family conflicts. The women are also weak and unable to work as before due to diminished energy levels. In cases of polygamous families, men have abandoned their families resulting in increased gender-based violence as culturally “if a man does not find food to eat, he will start beating his wife” as reported by the Bishop of North Karamoja Diocese Rt. Rev James Nasak as he narrates how the food shortage is affecting families poorly especially affecting the relationship between husband and wife.

Sexual Reproductive Health Issues

Pregnant women are likely to deliver prematurely while breast-feeding mothers may not have sufficient milk product, exposing children to malnutrition.

There has and is expected to be slow recovery processes and an increase in death for HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis patients as food are required to complement their treatment.

3. Local and national capacity

Coping Mechanisms

The elderly are consuming wild grass (“ekauda”) and wild plants. This is according to the July status report for the Kapeta sub-county submitted to the National Disaster Management Committee. Young women and girls are selling charcoal in exchange for sorghum residue while others are begging for food to survive.

The shortage of food crisis in Karamoja has raised concern and caused alarm all over the country. Many NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) and CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) have issued urgent calls for an appeal to address the food crisis in the region. The government of Uganda recently dispatched food relief recently.

<https://editions.visiongroup.co.ug/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=a44fac9d-3324-467b-9969-3edfb3e7888b>. The government food relief released recently did not even cover 10% of the population according to the Chairperson Kaboong District, “we received food for only 5 Sub counties from the government, but this food was not enough, they only got 10kgs of Maize and 5 Kgs of beans, which practically takes only 5 days for an average family, the government alone cannot manage this situation, we need support from all stakeholders, and we need to act quickly”.

International organizations like WHO (World Health Organization), and MERCY CORPS (supporting 100 HH) have given their support (medicine, food, vouchers).

4. Key needs and gaps

From the assessment conducted by the Church of Uganda, these needs were identified;

Food, health, and Nutrition: These are the most immediate needs as the Karamoja region is food insecure and experiencing a severe drought resulting in some cases of death. acute food shortages that have led to food shortages. According to the June 2022 report by the District Disaster Management Committee Kaboong alone, 44% of the population is food insecure with the worst hit sub-counties being Loyoro, Lodiko, Kaboong West, Kakamar, and Kaboong West. The escalating commodity prices in Uganda have not left the situation any better in Karamoja, for example, 2 kilograms of maize that was \$ 0.25 is now approx. 3 dollars, 250 grams of beans which used to be \$ 0.25 is now \$ 0.5 at harvest time. As a result, vulnerable households cannot afford to have two meals a day, according to Resident District Commissioner for Moroto, Mr. Tuko Justine.

Social Protection (Gender Based Violence & Child abuse): The cultural setting of Karimojong where women are the home breadwinners has severely affected the already existing Gender-based violence coupled with child abuse and neglect as women leave children unattended in search of food (sometimes for days).

As a result, children are left vulnerable and exposed to any kind of child abuse including child trafficking. Child-headed families, orphans, and disabled children are the most affected and the girl children have been targeted because they see them as a source of income hence vulnerable to vices like child marriages and others being defiled in the process.

Education:

In schools that the government is supporting with school meals, there is an overwhelming attendance of school children, and this is affecting school performance.

The districts in the region are still gathering more data and information on how deep the crisis in the region, the number of death where the District Disaster Management Committees have not reached is still scanty. It is still unclear when this information will reach the public.

ACT Church of Uganda is considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	X
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	

Capacity details of forum members with the intention to respond are given below.

ACT (Action by Churches Together) Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise	Support required	Estimated Budget range (USD)
Church of Uganda	Across Uganda with 37 Dioceses	Food Security, GBV (Gender Based Violence) program, community mobilization, peace building and conflict resolution	Funding	150,000

5. Potential responses

Church of Uganda (CoU) who operates in the affected districts is proposing to provide food initially, then later support to reduce Gender Based Violence and increase protection. In the medium term, CoU plans to support farmers in farming (conservation farming) and environment protection

The ACT Uganda forum members will require funding to respond to the short-, medium- and long-term effects and consequences of the food crisis highlighted during their assessment.

The Church of Uganda

he Church of Uganda has sub-offices spread across the Karamoja region with structures at the grassroots level and professional staff at its sub-offices. CoU has experience in emergency response with an emergency response team at the Provincial level, that provides technical emergency assistance.

Previous responses include 2010 and 2018 when the Church of Uganda led a Rapid Response in Bududa in response to the negative effects of a massive landslide. CoU in this intervention provided food and non-food items to 3000 people in 2010 and over 1000 HH in 2018.

In the recent past, the Church of Uganda has responded to over 90,000 South Sudan Refugees in Rhino Camp by providing Food and other basic household items. In 2008/2009, the Church of Uganda reached out to 21,320 Congolese refugees in Nakibaale Refugee settlement in Kisoro and Isingiro districts by providing Food and non-food items.

In 2007/2009 Church of Uganda implemented the ACT emergency program in the districts of Lira and Kitgum targeting 6,550 internally Displaced persons by giving them food and non-food items.

In 2020/21, The Church of Uganda led the Rapid Response for COVID-19 and implemented a cash program for over 1000 households and gender activities to address the COVID-19 challenges. The Secretariat under this response will work with the health development departments under the local Dioceses in Karamoja and North Karamoja which covers all the districts in the Karamoja region.

al conditions present in the region: frequent drought triggers other hazards such as water scarcity, conflict over resources, hunger, outmigration, and diseases.