

Alert note

Uganda, 23rd July 2026

Completed by: Josephine Ninsiima (Church of Uganda)

Date completed: 20/7/2026

Forum: Uganda Forum

Type of emergency: Hunger Crisis

Date of emergency (if rapid onset): June/July 2026

1. The nature of the emergency

Karamoja Sub-region has been affected by widespread food insecurity due to crop failure, water and pasture shortages, and livestock losses, resulting in a slow-onset humanitarian emergency driven by prolonged drought, erratic and poorly distributed rainfall, and extended dry spells during the 2026 first agricultural season ([BBC](#)). Although rains in March 2026 supported initial planting, rainfall significantly declined from late April through June 2026.

The Ugandan government says at least 16 people have died from hunger in recent weeks in the north-eastern region of Karamoja due to a prolonged drought ([BBC](#)).

The impact and scale of the emergency

Based on secondary information, this is a medium-scale emergency affecting the Karamoja sub-region in Uganda, as few households in the affected region have food reserves that may last for more than a month before the next harvest, and most communities are likely to face widespread food insecurity.

The drought has affected 8 out of the 9 districts in the Karamoja sub-region, namely Abim, Kaabong, Karenga, Moroto, Amudat, Kotido, Napak and Nakapiripirit, with Kotido and Kaabong being the most affected.

For example, in Kotido, the Global Acute Malnutrition rate is at 40% in some areas like Napumpum, above WHO thresholds of 5-9% due to more than 5 moderate/below average harvest seasons according to the Kotido District food security and disaster situation update of June 2026.

The Karamoja region in Northeastern Uganda is a rugged, remote, and semi-arid landscape spanning approximately 27,500 square kilometres. It is home to roughly 1.5 million people primarily from the Karamojong ethnic group, and is defined by its deep cultural preservation, pastoralist lifestyle, and significant socioeconomic and environmental challenges.

Livelihoods in Karamoja depend primarily on rain-fed crop production and livestock rearing (subsistence farming). The region experiences recurrent droughts, but the prolonged dry spells during the 2026 first growing season have caused unusually severe agricultural losses.

During the current period (April–July 2026), 32 percent of the analysed population in Uganda's Karamoja region are facing high levels of acute food insecurity. There is a likelihood that without sufficient intervention, those in IPC Phase 1 and 2 may slide into IPC Categories 3 and 4 in the coming months.

The current breakdown is as follows ([IPC](#)):

IPC Category	Population expected to be affected by February 2027	Percentage of the population
Phase 1 (Acceptable)	441,735	30%
Phase 2 (Alert)	581,016	39%
Phase 3 (Serious)	432,109	29%

Phase 4 (Critical/emergency)	41,259	3%
Children under five, women (pregnant and lactating), older persons, person with disabilities are populations most affected. School feeding programs will also be overwhelmed with the number of children requiring school feeding. <u>How the people have been affected</u> The drought has caused food insecurity, rising malnutrition, loss of livestock, and decreased income from poor harvests and livestock sales. Higher food prices make it harder for families to meet basic needs, leading to negative coping strategies like cutting meals and selling assets. Women and girls face heightened risks of violence while seeking food and water. Crop failures have depleted food supplies, and livestock are suffering from lack of food and water. Food prices are rising, making basic items too expensive, while lower agricultural production has cut household incomes. Vulnerable groups face increased risks of malnutrition, disease, and poverty. Without urgent help, the situation may worsen, leading to high mortality and severe food insecurity. The crisis will likely result in long-term food insecurity in the region due to crop failures and reduced livestock, harming livelihoods and well-being in communities. Household incomes will drop, increasing poverty. Children may leave school for various reasons. Vulnerable groups will face heightened risks of malnutrition and neglect. Environmental degradation could occur, weakening community resilience and increasing reliance on outside aid without timely support.		
3. Local and national capacity		
Families are coping with declining livelihoods by reducing meals and portion sizes, eating wild plants, and children moving to mining for work while adults find casual labor. Some households have sold livestock to meet their needs. Pastoralists are moving livestock for better resources, to areas with better pasture and water availability, which has increased pressure on limited resources and contributed to risks such as livestock disease outbreaks and conflict. Increasing pressure and risks like disease and conflict (Nakapiripirit DLG - Food security report). Humanitarian response across the Karamoja sub-region is currently being coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The government of Uganda is supporting some households under the Parish Development Model, a government-led initiative in Uganda that provides direct capital to parish-led enterprise groups to invest in climate-smart agriculture and agro-processing. The Model is aimed at transforming subsistence households into the money economy. These efforts are not enough to address current challenges; however, the model faces major hurdles in the region due to ongoing drought, severe poverty, and structural food shortages. <i>Emyooga</i>, a presidential initiative aimed at wealth and job creation is supported some communities with agricultural support and livelihood programmes. However, this initiative is insufficient to meet the scale of the current needs and lacks the capacity to address foundational challenges like erratic weather, limited land access, and a lack of direct market pathways for agricultural products. The President of the Republic of Uganda also directed the Ministry of Finance to release approximately USD 12 million to support those who are affected (Media). The UN partners have also promised to stand with the government through UNOCHA and other UN partners. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) under the government of Uganda is at the forefront of the response to the hunger crisis in the Karamoja region, supported by Local non-governmental organizations, both INGO's and NGOs like FAO, WFP, Caritas, and Mercy Corps. The District Local governments in the Karamoja sub-region and lower-level sub-counties are equally involved,		

conducting assessments and coordinating with the Office of the Prime Minister. However, local capacity remains overstretched due to the scale and duration of the crisis.

The Government of Uganda, through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), has rolled out massive emergency food relief operations for the Karamoja sub-region of 10,000 tons of relief food to reach nearly 314,000 households across nine affected districts.

As part of the emergency response, on 8th July 2026, the Government of Uganda delivered 22 tonnes of relief food to Loduku and Loyoru sub-counties in Kaabong District. The consignment included 13 tonnes of maize flour and nine tonnes of beans to provide immediate support to vulnerable households facing acute food insecurity ([OPM, 2026](#)).

WFP is helping with school feeding in response to the crisis, while FAO is assessing needs in the region. HINGO in Uganda has formed a subgroup to address food insecurity in Karamoja. Political interests hinder the effective implementation of the National Preparedness Response plan.

4. Key needs and gaps

Food and Nutrition: The main anticipated needs are food and cash assistance for households experiencing food insecurity, nutrition screening and referrals to supplementary feeding programs for Children under 5, Lactating and pregnant mothers, and other individuals with underlying chronic illnesses.

Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH): Rehabilitation of boreholes, water trucking where necessary, hygiene promotion, and basic sanitation services are needed.

Health: supplies and outreach services.

Protection: integrated GBV awareness, Psychosocial support, and other protection measures ds.

Agriculture & Livestock input: drought-resistant seeds, agriculture extension, and livestock interventions, small-scale irrigation technologies, community early warning systems, fertilizers and post-harvest storage skills.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

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

5. Forum Capacity and members' intention to respond

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise and experience
Church of Uganda	Kaboong District	Food Assistance & PSS.
Rural Action Community Based Organisation - (RACOB AO)	Napak District	Food Assistance & PSS

6. Potential responses

The RRF will be implemented by the two (2) national members, Church of Uganda and RACOB AO, with Church of Uganda as the lead of the response on behalf of the forum, with a coordination role from the ACT Uganda Forum Coordinator and Convenor. The national members are requesting USD 130,000 for a 6-month response to 50,000 Households with urgent humanitarian assistance and early recovery activities.

CoU and RACOBABO are preparing to conduct a rapid needs assessment in the Karamoja sub-region. An analysis of district-led needs assessments conducted by government agencies in the most affected districts and secondary data indicates that the most urgent needs include food (including school feeding), Safe water, CASH (where markets are functioning), and livelihood assistance.

There is also a need for nutrition support targeting children, pregnant and lactating mothers, school feeding, and protection to reduce the risk of GBV and domestic violence escalation and psychosocial support for affected households.

The Church of Uganda is already working with the district to reach out to the affected families that lost their loved ones with prayer and spiritual support.

At nation level, ACT Uganda Forum is already providing secondary data from the humanitarian international High NGOs and through the humanitarian technical working group for more guided support.