

UGANDA - Displaced Persons

Date: 1983 (FY 83)

Location: Luwero, Mpigi, and Mubende Districts

No. Dead: Not reported

No. Affected: Approximately 150,000

Damage: Not reported

The Disaster

Widespread civil disorder continues in Uganda nearly five years after Idi Amin's ouster. The goal of political and social stability is thwarted by deep-seated regional and tribal animosities which often erupt in acts of terrorism.

In one such demonstration of violence, an estimated 150,000 people were displaced during 1983 in the central districts of Luwero, Mpigi, and Mubende. According to the Ugandan government's account of the disaster, the majority of the displaced people had been held hostage by dissident groups, subjected to physical and mental suffering, and dispossessed of their property.

The several widely scattered camps in which the government housed the displaced people were generally comprised of makeshift structures, seriously overcrowded, and unsanitary. Insufficient food resulted in widespread malnutrition among the camps' populations.

The unstable situation in the country and inadequate transport facilities hampered relief operations, which were expected to continue for an extended period of time. An even longer term rehabilitation period would be required before the displaced people could return to their homes and regain self-sufficiency.

Action Taken by the Government of Uganda (GOU) and Non-Governmental Organizations

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the GOU appealed formally to the USG and other donor governments on September 19 for relief assistance for the displaced persons in Luwero, Mpigi, and Mubende Districts. At that time, the GOU also stated its intention to have the national relief program coordinated and administered by the Office of the Prime Minister under a Chief Relief Administrator. The latter official would be responsible for channeling all external and internal assistance and would serve as chairman of a government relief coordinating committee comprising representatives of several ministries involved with relief and rehabilitation activities.

The GOU promised to improve living conditions in the camps and increase security, both for the camps and for the agencies delivering relief supplies.

At the request of the GOU, the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) acted as lead agency in setting up the relief operation. The URCS was responsible for registering and tracing the displaced people and for their feeding and medical care. Despite food shortages and problems with security and logistics, some 70 volunteers distributed 364 tons of maize meal (posho) and rice and 80 tons of beans to families in 27 camps in September alone. The URCS also distributed clothing and blankets in the camps and cared for the sick through the efforts of five mobile medical teams consisting of ten volunteers each.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

The U.S. Ambassador, Allen C. Davis, determined on August 29 that the displaced persons situation in Luwero and nearby districts of central Uganda constituted a disaster of sufficient magnitude to warrant USG assistance. He exercised his disaster relief authority to forward \$25,000 to the Uganda Red Cross. An Inter-Agency Group considering the U.S. offer of assistance had already recommended that part of the money be used for the purchase of 46 tons of beans and the balance be used to transport maize flour from Jinja to Kampala and thence to the camps.....\$25,000

At the request of the USAID Mission in Kampala, A.I.D.'s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) provided an additional \$25,000 for the purchase of emergency foodstuffs, soap, and medical supplies. Of that sum, \$16,000 was transferred to the League of Red Cross Societies (LORCS) and \$9,000 to UNICEF.....\$25,000

In view of the acute logistics problem and the difficulty and expense of leasing mechanically sound trucks in Uganda, OFDA agreed to the Mission's request for funds to purchase two trucks locally. The Mission proposed using any funds left over from the grant to set up a maintenance contract with a local Ford dealer.....\$50,000

Total FY 83.....\$100,000

Assistance to Uganda continues in FY 1984 with OFDA's approval of a Mission allotment to be used for the local purchase of hoes and pangos (machetes).....\$75,000

Total FY 84.....\$75,000

TOTAL.....\$175,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

CARE and Save the Children Federation (working with Oxfam) - these U.S.-based voluntary agencies with ongoing programs in Uganda provided vehicles to transport relief supplies to the camps. Information is unavailable as to other assistance these and other groups may have given.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

A number of countries and international agencies have provided development assistance and food to Uganda since Amin's departure in order to speed the country's economic recovery. Except for the following organizations, however, information is unavailable as to the type of assistance that may have been provided in response to this particular disaster.

LORCS/International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRS) - carried out an integrated Red Cross operation, together with the URCS. LORCS issued an international appeal for approximately \$5.8 million and sent several delegates to Uganda to work with the National Society. ICRS conducted a survey of the affected area at the GOU's request and agreed to perform its traditional protective and tracing services in view of the country's security problems.

UNICEF - engaged in an ongoing program, providing vehicles for the transport of relief supplies to the camps.