



INFORMATION BULLETIN

Kenya Red Cross Society

Alleviating Human Suffering

KENYA: MT. ELGON CLASHES

27 March 2007

The Kenya Red Cross Society's mission is to build capacity and respond with vigour, compassion and empathy to the victims of disaster and those at risk, in the most effective and efficient manner. It works closely with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 185 countries.

In Brief

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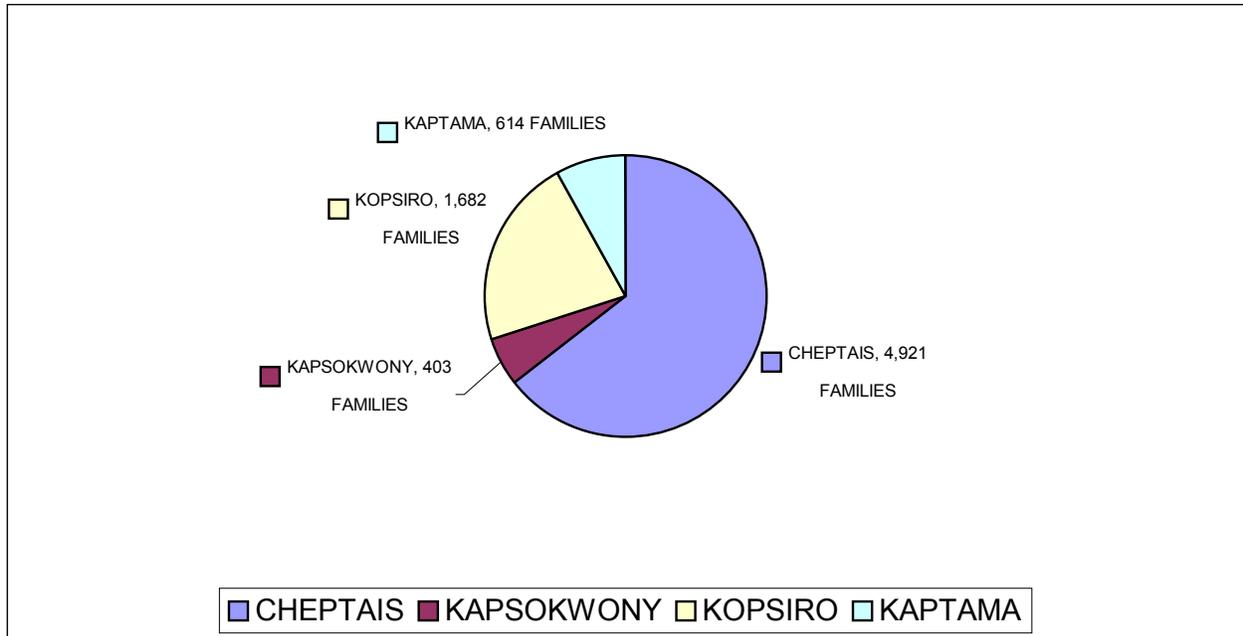
The Situation

Tension is still rife in Mt. Elgon District, with the number of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) increasing drastically to over 45,720 people (7,620 families) since clashes erupted in late December 2006. 137 lives have been lost and over 110 people have been injured by bullets, *panga* cuts and burns and are being treated in local dispensaries. Diseases and infant mortality have increased due to the weather conditions. Of the 137 lives lost, 43 people, that is, 30 children and 13 adults, lost their lives due to pneumonia and malnutrition cases.

The most adversely affected areas in Mt. Elgon District are Cheptais, Tuikut, Kopsiro, Cheskaki, Kimabole, Kaptama, Kapsokwony and Chebyuk. In Bungoma District, the affected areas are Chwele, Malakisi, Mayanja, Tamlega, Sirisia, Lwandanyi, Tulienge, Machakha and Changara. The clashes are concentrated in Tuikut and Kopsiro areas of Mt. Elgon. The IDPs are living mainly in market centres with relatives, while others are sheltered in churches, schools, mosques and government institutions.

With the escalation of the clashes, the current number of IDPs is expected to increase further. Tension has gripped the area as more people continue to live in fear of further attacks. Some residents have requested to be settled in camps since it is becoming increasingly difficult to live with relatives or pay rent.

Below chart shows the number of families affected/displaced in Mt. Elgon



Over 15 schools were adversely affected and closed down and learning severely interrupted in other schools due to the clashes. As security forces continue to restore peace, more people continue to move from their homes for fear of their lives. Residents have been left extremely vulnerable and are in dire need of food, shelter, clothing and water. The population is in dire need of food, shelter and clothing and potable water since most residents have been left extremely vulnerable as their houses and food stocks have been burned and their livestock and livelihood threatened. In an attempt to improve their economic situation, the affected people are working in shambas, hotels and other recreational areas, begging and receiving limited support from the local community and religious organizations. Prostitution has also escalated as residents attempt to earn a living.

Health facilities have been strained beyond their capacity with many health attendants abandoning their work because of fear of being attacked. There are limited health facilities and personnel in the health centres, compelling the few health workers to work round the clock to attend to the patients. Some, like Kimabole and Koksilo, are reported not to be operating at all. The Ministry of Health (MoH) through DMOH reported an upsurge of malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, Respiratory Tract Infection (RTIs) and other communicable diseases. This epidemiological trend is expected during and immediately after floods. Some IDPs, especially children and pregnant mothers, are suffering from pneumonia and malaria. A number of children are experiencing malnutrition. Most of the IDPs are traumatised by the experience and need psychological counseling.



A Red Cross volunteer giving relief assistance to an IDP

The food security situation is in a deplorable condition as the IDPs left behind their crops on farmlands. Due to the security operation, the IDPs have not been allowed to harvest their crops, leading to wastage. There are also minimal farming activities going on, as people are not accessing their land currently.

Congestion in the hosting divisions has led to competition for scarce water and sanitation facilities, leading to a compromise of hygiene standards. Health problems have been exacerbated by the lack of adequate water and sanitation systems in churches, schools and government institutions where the IDPs sought refuge. The IDPs are likely to fall ill due to diseases such as diarrhoea and other diseases transmitted by the faecal-oral route. Other water and sanitation related diseases include those carried by vectors associated with solid waste and water.

Red Cross Action

The National Society has already distributed relief supplies to the worth Ksh 2,934,300 to the communities affected. So far, 2,054 families have been reached with relief food and another 1,002 families reached with non-food items in Mt. Elgon and Bungoma since the onset of the clashes. The distribution was mainly concentrated in Cheptais and Kopsiro divisions. The National Society is also planning to distribute over 500 MT of assorted food items worth over Ksh 11 million to the affected people. In addition, two rub halls have been erected in Kapsokwony and Cheptais Divisions.

The National Society also distributed vital medical equipment and medicines in Chwele, Malakisi and Cheptais health centres, as well as Mt. Elgon District Hospital. The National Society, which is constantly on the ground and has access to the IDPs, continues to conduct regular assessments to determine emerging needs among the IDPs and affected communities.

Table below indicates the areas where the medical items were distributed:

Health Facility	Dressing Kit- Package	Assorted Items - Package	No. Of Coartem Doses	Remarks
Chwele Health Centre	1	1	300	The donations created significant impact, since there were no drugs in stock.
Malakisi Health Centre	1	1	300	The attendance of patients increased slightly due to the supply of medical items.
Cheptais Health Centre	1	1	300	The attendance to patients has gone up from 60 to over 120 people per day since the distribution of the medical items.
Mt. Elgon District Hospital	3	3	500	This is the district hospital. Other centres will benefit from this distribution.

Coordination

Mt. Elgon has been a security zone with very limited access to outsiders. Scores of GSU forces and Administration Police have been deployed to the affected area to restore peace. The National Society has mainly been working together with other partners to support those who have been affected by the clashes. Various organisations (both international and local) have donated both cash and in-kind donations to support the National Society

Below is a summary of organizations that supported through the Kenya Red Cross

No.	Organisation	Donation
1.	Rural women peace link	Blankets – 20 pieces and Maize – 3 bags
2.	St. Lukes ACK Kitale	Blankets – 88 pieces, Maize - 44 bags, Bar soap – 7 boxes (1*12 pieces per box), Cooking oil – 2 boxes (1*100gms*48 tins per box) Assorted clothes – 8 sacks
3.	Calvary church USA	Assorted clothes for 60 families and cash donation of Ksh 12,500
4.	Lukes Fountation	Medical camp
5.	NCKK	Provided logistical support to Branch volunteers during needs assessment.
6.	UNICEF	Donation of 2000 family kits and 100 educational kits