



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**10/07/2008**

### **Red Cross launches \$910,653 appeal to curb Hepatitis, cholera**

The International Federation for the Red Cross (IFRC) together with Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) have launched an appeal for CHF947,079 (USD910,653 or EUR586,427) in cash and kind to fight cholera and Hepatitis E epidemics in eastern and northern Uganda.

The interventions will cover seven affected districts including Pallisa, Mbale, Butaleja, Tororo, Manafwa, Kitgum and Pader, targeting an estimated population of 425,095 people.

Cholera has mainly been reported in the eastern districts of Pallisa, Manafwa, Tororo, Mbale, Butaleja with 371 cases and 28 deaths while Hepatitis E has so far affected 3,530 people and killed 67 in Kitgum, Pader and Gulu districts in Northern Uganda.

Limited access to safe water and poor sanitation facilities are escalating the spread of the diseases in the affected districts.

Since cholera and Hepatitis E are water-borne diseases and prevention measures are the same, the support being appealed for will help URCS to carry out a large scale programme of water, sanitation and hygiene interventions in the affected districts to address the current outbreaks and to reduce the risk of repeated outbreaks in future.

The funds will also be used to provide support to the volunteers and staff in the affected branches to implement activities and to purchase all necessary requirements for the operation.

The National Society, with support from the IFRC DREF, has already provided support in terms of sensitization of affected communities on good hygiene

practices, distribution of non food items, water chlorination and construction of latrines.

According to the URCS needs assessment, chlorination of water sources in the affected districts, decongestion of camps and increasing the number of health staff in the rural health facilities are vital steps in preventing the transmission of the viruses.

The Ugandan Ministry of Health needs assessment revealed that the affected districts have latrine coverage as low as 40% and safe water coverage at less than 48%.

The camps in Kitgum district, the worst-hit by Hepatitis E are characterized by weakened community and social networks, decreased economic opportunities and coping mechanisms for the vulnerable. This leads to poor hygiene conditions that lead to the rapid spread of diseases like cholera, meningitis and Ebola.

**For details contact:**

**Mr. Michael Nataka - Acting Secretary General**

**Tel: 0772401738**

**General line: 0312260616/7**

**Email: [natakam@redcrossug.org](mailto:natakam@redcrossug.org)**

**Catherine Ntabadde – PRO**

**Tel: 0772629567**

**Email: [cntabadde@redcrossug.org](mailto:cntabadde@redcrossug.org)**

**Hasifa Kabejja – Assistant PRO**

**Tel: 0712580778**

**Email: [hkabejja@redcrossug.org](mailto:hkabejja@redcrossug.org)**

