

# Karamoja Drought

June 15<sup>th</sup> 2016

Karamoja is once again facing a dry spell at a very critical time. The people were very glad to welcome the rains at the beginning of April. People went out to cultivate. The crops were growing very well. Unfortunately, since mid May there has not been any rain.



The rain cut short many people who were still cultivating. The crops that had been planted at the beginning of rains had grown up and some had now started flowering but unfortunately because of the heat they are now withering and dying.

What is happening in Karamoja now is a major disaster. We are facing a second year of total crop failure. The maize that was planted has now died. The sorghum which is normally much more resistant is also now starting to die. With the sorghum crop gone,

the situation for the farmers is dire. Farming here is subsistence farming. It is primarily for local consumption with little or no surplus for trade. Moreover it is not just the loss of crop that we are talking about - farmers invested their money, time and energy in the farms. All that is now gone.

With the crops gone, there is no food and no money. The desperate situation that we thought was soon passing is now with us again. Very soon there will be no vegetables which have



supplemented the little food that people had. The people are becoming restless. Thievery and violence are becoming common. Worst of all we are also experiencing a wave of suicide. Within Panyangara Parish alone there have been six suicides since March this year.

Meanwhile the situation of the old people, the sick and the children is increasingly becoming bad. Even among those that are getting support from us things are not easy. The little support they get they have to share it with the larger family members. As a result some of those who are sickly have died. It is even worst with those who are HIV positive since they cannot take drugs without eating any solid food.

However, there is still some glimpse of hope. There are still some dark clouds gathering. If the rains were to come back soon, some crops could still survive. In which case the harvest will be poor but at **least** there will be something.

In the month of May and part of June, Caritas Kotido distributed some food in parts of Kotido town area. The World Food Programme with their partners are also continuing with their normal distribution. Sadly they have not scaled it up.



On our part we were once again very pleased to receive the donation of £30,000.00 which came in June. It has helped us to serve the people well this month. As usual we are getting very huge numbers of desperate people but we do our best to serve as much as we can. We are very grateful to SPICMA and the donors for all your support. Thank you

Your help is saving lives here in Karamoja.

Fr. Sylvester Odhiambo - Mill Hill Missionary

