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## Food as a human right during disasters in Uganda

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### Highlights

- Implementation of relevant constitutional and policy provisions on the right to adequate food and disaster management in Uganda appeared slow.
- There is a reality gap since supportive policies and plans are not financed by the national budget in anticipation of external assistance.
- Specific legislation to fund and institutionalize disaster preparedness and management capabilities was lacking.
- Due to capacity constraints, an approach of humanitarian relief was being entrenched in contradiction to State obligations on the right to adequate food.
- Human rights capacity development is paramount.


### Abstract


Natural and human induced disasters are a threat to food security, economic progress and livelihoods in Uganda. However, we have limited knowledge regarding the putative role of the human rights dimension to the impact and management of such tragedies. In this article we assessed the present policies, legislation and institutional capabilities to ascertain whether they could assure the right to adequate food during disaster situations in Uganda.

Using purposive sampling, 52 duty bearers working in institutions deemed relevant to food security, nutrition and disaster management were interviewed using a semi-structured guide. Relevant provisions from policy, legislation, institutional budgets and records of Parliament provided the context for analysis.

The most important concern coming from the analyses of the information retrieved were inadequate preparedness mechanisms and capabilities. Whereas Uganda's Constitution proclaims the right to adequate food, and the need to establish a contingencies fund and commission responsible for disaster preparedness and management, they had not been instituted. Implementation of relevant policies appeared slow, especially with regard to assuring adequate relief food as a State obligation. Legislation to guarantee funding and institutionalisation of necessary disaster preparedness and management capabilities was not in place. An ambitious 5-year Uganda Nutrition Action Plan adopted in 2011 had not yet been funded by mid-2013, implying a reality gap in nutrition programming. Budget architecture and financing to disaster management have in effect fallen short of assuring adequate relief food as a human right.

Due to capacity constraints, an approach of humanitarian relief may be entrenched in contradiction of State obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. To stay ahead of the potential threats, the Government with support of the Parliament and relevant partners need to enact legislation to appropriate budget resources needed to institute a mechanism of capabilities to implement the constitutional and policy provisions on the right to adequate food and disaster management.

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### Keywords

Right to adequate food; Uganda; Disaster management; Capabilities