

KENYA: SOMALI REFUGEES

11 February

1997

Emergency Appeal no. 01.04/96
situation report no. 4
period covered: October - December 1996

Some 20,000 refugees from the conflict and famine in neighbouring Somalia are still resident in three camps near Mombasa on the Kenyan coast. The Federation and Kenyan Red Cross Society (KRCS) have been supporting the Somali Refugees, providing camp management, distribution of food and non-food items, preventive and curative health care and social services for five years. It had been expected that this operation would end in October 1996 when the deadline for voluntary repatriation passed. However, another deadline has since passed and in late November, the suspension of the closure of the three camps was announced by the Kenyan Government. The situation in all three camps is tense, and two fires in Swaleh Nguru camp, the second of which saw large-scale intervention (food, shelter materials) from the Federation and KRCS, have not made life any easier for the refugees.

The context

The KRCS/Federation supported operation for Somali refugees has been running since February 1992, soon after the refugees' initial arrival in Kenya from civil war and famine in Somalia. Support services include camp management, distribution of food and non-food items, preventive and curative health care and the provision of social services (education, mental health, physiotherapy, and vocational training). The Federation/KRCS currently shares responsibility for three camps holding just under 20,000 refugees.

The intended closure of the camps by the end of 1996 was not realised due to the non-co-operation of the refugees. The original October 15 deadline for "voluntary registration" to north-eastern Kenya passed without any registrations. The second extended deadline expired November 15. Following a UNHCR meeting with elders, the immediate closure of the coastal camps was announced. On November 22, the Government of Kenya announced the suspension of the closure of these camps.

Latest events

The following resettlements (all to the USA) took place during the period under review:

October - 130 individuals;

November - 108 individuals (75 adults, 25 children, 8 infants);

December - families of 17 individuals from Swaleh Nguru camp.

In October, peace talks between the warring factions in Somalia, mediated by President Moi of Kenya, produced a peace agreement between the three leaders - Hussein Aideed, Ali Mahdi Mohammed and Osman Atto. However, the situation in the camps deteriorated, with a number of security incidents occurring in Hatimi, Swaleh Nguru and Jomvu camps.

The Hatimi refugee camp has reported an influx of refugees due to the current interviews for resettlement to the United States, by the Joint Voluntary Agency. This has also led to the mushrooming of new structures built by the registered refugees who were initially staying in the town.

On December 28 a fire broke out in Swaleh Nguru. Fourteen structures, mainly business stalls, were totally destroyed. A further fire in January led to the Federation and Kenyan Red Cross distributing high-protein biscuits, maize and shelter material to 14,000 refugees. A steady increase in malaria cases has resulted from the short rains experienced from November to early December.

In an effort to reduce the running cost of the Project, plans are underway to construct an incinerator in Swaleh Nguru by the end of January 1997. Once completed, the incinerator will drastically cut down the cost of garbage collection.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Population Figures Camps

CAMP	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Swaleh Nguru	7,365	7,235	7,205	7,211
Hatimy	3,312	3,312	3,312	3,312
Jomvu	5,231	5,231	5,231	5,231
Total	15,908	15,778	15,748	15,754

Food and Non-Food Distribution

In the period under review, 236 metric tons of food was distributed each month to the refugee population. A full basket of food provisions consisting of cereals (wheat and maize flour), lentils, vegetable oil and salt was distributed to the registered refugees.

Food Distributions

ITEMS	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Cereals	153	173	198	222
Lentils / Pulses	223	24	24	0
Vegetable oil	12	13	12	12
Salt	2	2	2	2
Total (mt)	237	236	236	236

Supplementary Feeding Programmes were introduced in the camps. The beneficiaries of these programmes, who come predominantly from the unregistered population, receive a ration of sugar vegetable oil and blended foods (at 170 grams per person per day). The supplementary feeding programme was suspended in the second half of December as food was found to be mouldy and containing weevils. The programme will resume once stocks are replenished by WFP.

Supplementary Feeding Statistics

CAMP	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Swaleh Nguru	73	59	73	222
Hatimi	33	18	15	0
Jomvu	52	21	30	12
Total	158	98	118	2

In October, the Social Services Department distributed 191 blankets to disabled children, 226 blankets to vulnerable families, and school uniforms and clothes to pre-school and primary school children from vulnerable families.

In November, 6,829 pairs of shoes were distributed to Swaleh Nguru camp and 48 blankets were distributed to the vulnerable caseload.

Health

Data analysis from Jomvu clinic indicates that jiggers have become a major health problem, and as a response to this the department conducted a Jiggers campaign on December 11. Information regarding the disease was disseminated through the refugee Elders and Health workers. A total of 2,268 refugees were surveyed and 543 (24%) were disinfected. A worm infestation survey was conducted in Hatimi camp. Out of the 122 specimens received 56% contained worms. A de-worming campaign will be conducted once the full results of the survey are received.

In October, an immunisation coverage survey and immunisation campaign was held in all camps. 1,846 children under the age of five were surveyed and 1,084 vaccines were administered. In all, 84% of children under the age of one and 85% of children between the ages of one and five were fully immunised. The Department has also continued to provide drug therapy, psychotherapeutic group sessions and general psychological support through the Mental Health Programme

Health Statistics for Period Under Review

CAMP	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Outpatients	4,621	3,060	4,126
Admissions	251	160	344
Referral	125	81	114
TB cases	105	81	86
Total	3,270	3,382	4,670
Mental Health	954	841	965
Physiotherapy	432	442	442

Malaria, diarrhoea and respiratory infections are still the most common causes of morbidity and of death. The number of admissions has increased dramatically in the last month in the Jomvu Clinic and Utange Clinic, where the bed occupancy is now 100%. This is due to the seasonal increase in malaria cases. The overall increase in the number of cases can be attributed to the stress factors due to fear among the refugees of the camps' closure.

Water, Sanitation and Construction

In the last half of the month under review, commercial water trucking was suspended and the Red Cross water tanker started operating seven days a week. Generally the water situation in the camps remains adequate and stable despite the isolated water interruptions associated with the power fluctuations being experienced in the Coastal Region. A meeting was held with the sanitation workers to lay strategies for improving the sanitary conditions in all three camps. The Red Cross is also reviewing its approach towards promoting community involvement in relation to such a project.

Social Services - School enrolment for September, October and November

CLASS	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
Pre- school	385	380	380
Primary school	1,009	1,060	1,160
Adult classes	119	121	141
Total	1,508	1,561	1,681

While schools were closed for December holidays, teachers in Swaleh Nguru Camp undertook an in-service training course on school management and administration procedures. The Scouts group continued with their normal training.

On December 5 and 6, the American Red Cross gave the KRCS 10,000 pairs of sandals to the KRCS, the Kilifi and Kwale Branches; each branch received 5,000 pairs of sandals. The ceremony was presided over by the Secretary General of KRCS.

Personnel Training and Development

A number of workshops, in which National Staff participated, were held during the period under review: the Media Training Course sponsored by ICRC which

focused on providing the skills needed for dealing with the media; the Community Development Training Course on Micro-enterprise skills for Community Development workers and the Disaster Action Team Workshop

Staff Composition - October to December

CATEGORY	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Federation Delegates	4	4	3
National Staff	1	1	1
National Society Staff	132	129	129
GoK Seconded Staff	12	14	14
Refugee Volunteers	248	252	252
Total	397	400	399

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

- Regional Co-ordinator from the German-based Centre for Disease Control and Prevention regarding the medical processes for the refugees in the Hatimi camp who are scheduled for resettlement;
- Training Co-ordinator for the International Organisation for Migration to discuss and set up arrangements for training and cultural classes for the resettlement caseload.
- In December the Secretariat's Desk Officer and Mr. Ephraim. M. Gathaiya, KRCS, Secretary General visited Kenya delegation.
- KRCS made a nutritional survey in North East Kenya, in Garissa, which started on 28 December. The exercise started on 28 December and is a follow up of the 2nd mission carried out from 9 to 21 of December 1996 of the Drought Assessment in North Eastern Province, the Emergency Appeal is forthcoming.

Conclusion

The unregistered population in all the camps still do not receive food assistance from the Programme as they are not recognised by the UNHCR. It is imperative that UNHCR reviews their status stance and forms a plan to either relocate them or to formalise their stay in the camps.

Following the fighting and fire in the Swaleh Nguru camp on 23 January 1997, where the camp was burned to the ground, one refugee killed and 23 wounded, the Government of Kenya's reaction was to announce on Monday 27 January that "all camps on the coast should be closed with immediate effect". Negotiations are being undertaken by UNHCR, the Government of Kenya, the Kenya Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to come up with a reasonable time frame for this action. In the meantime a large majority of the 8,000 refugees have started rebuilding their shelters.

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