

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## COTE D'IVOIRE: CIVIL UNREST & POLIO SUPPORT

26 March, 2004

*The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.*

### In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. While the Federation does not anticipate further immediate needs, a polio vaccination campaign that was scheduled to begin shortly was threatened with cancellation, and the Government urgently requested the intervention and assistance of the Red Cross of the Cote d'Ivoire, supported by the Federation. The cost of the operation is estimated at CHF 40,000, and the Federation is seeking support from donors for this unplanned emergency operation. Further information will be made available as the situation evolves.

*For further information specifically related to this operation please contact: In Geneva: Mark Willis, Regional Officer, Africa Department, email: [mark.willis@ifrc.org](mailto:mark.willis@ifrc.org); phone: +41 22 730 4303; fax 41.22.733.03.95*

*All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

### The Situation

Opposition groups in Cote d'Ivoire attempted to hold a rally in the city centre on Thursday, 25 March 2004, ignoring a ban by authorities. As they gathered clashes broke out with security forces, and at least 25 people were killed.

### Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The International Federation's office was closed as of Wednesday afternoon, and delegates were instructed to remain in their houses. The Federation's head of regional office in Abidjan reported sporadic shooting throughout the day on Thursday. The regional office, the Red Cross Society of Cote d'Ivoire, and the ICRC remained in close contact to monitor the situation which remains volatile. The Red Cross Society of Cote d'Ivoire also received regular information on where and how to find victims (dead and injured), and responded to constant calls for assistance. From the beginning of the clashes Red Cross volunteers actively assisted the injured to reach shelter and the hospitals that remained open and operational. Some 145 injured persons were treated on the spot, and 74 people were evacuated to hospitals. Dozens of volunteers were mobilized in 8 communes of Abidjan to assist those affected by the violence.

The coordination of the operation by the Red Cross was exemplary and the radio system proved critical in assuring that the most difficult cases were addressed in the right time and people were delivered to the appropriate locations for treatment. The willingness of the Red Cross volunteers to mobilize in the face of the danger is a tribute to their courage, and the work was performed with professionalism. The training received over the past months from both the Federation and the ICRC offices was proved effective.

The Ministry of Health and WHO have asked the Red Cross Society of Cote d'Ivoire to take over the polio vaccination campaign that was scheduled to begin on Friday. The groups who were originally committed to carry out the campaign are unable to perform the tasks required and the authorities consider that only the national society, with support from the Federation, is in a position to carry out the vaccinations. It is imperative that the campaign move ahead as the vaccinations are part of a larger synchronized campaign, the effectiveness of which can be seriously compromised if a vaccination cycle is missed. Security permitting, the national society will start the campaign next week, with the support of the Federation's regional office. The costs of the program are estimated at CHF 40,000, and the Federation is urgently seeking support from donors for this emergency and unplanned operation.

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