

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

TOGO: CIVIL TRANSITION

8 February 2005

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. 1/2005) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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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

The President of Togo, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, died on Saturday 5 February at the age of 69. He was in power for 38 years, Africa's longest-serving head of state. After legalising political parties in 1991, he won three contentious elections. Internal political crises and civil unrest have resulted in population movements by Togolese to the neighbouring countries of Ghana, Benin and Nigeria: in 1993, approximately 350,000 fled to Ghana, Benin and Nigeria. In 1998, tension again increased related to elections in Togo, with some unrest in the capital Lomé.

Following the death of the president, there is concern that order should be maintained and the previous disruptions and unrests should not reoccur. At the moment, Togo's airports, sea ports and land frontiers are closed. The late president's son, Faure Gnassingbe, a minister in the government, was formally sworn in as president on Monday 7 February.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

On Sunday 6 February, the Regional Delegation together with the Nigeria Sub-Regional Office/Lagos and Mano River Sub-Regional Office/Abidjan organized an emergency meeting in Dakar with representatives of the Togolese Red Cross and Ghana Red Cross. Both national societies see an urgent need to prepare for potential civil unrest and population movements. Two scenarios and respective necessary actions were analysed: Peaceful situation or internal conflict with population movements within Togo, but also to the neighbouring countries of Benin and Ghana. Based on the previous experience of the national societies within the region, the branches and volunteers at the border areas are alerted and prepare themselves.

The Togolese Red Cross has been supported by the ICRC in 2004 to train volunteers, provide basic equipment to branches and install a radio communication system. Training specific to population movement is carried out once a year. A similar programme is carried out with the Ghana Red Cross.

The ICRC office in Abidjan confirmed to send emergency equipment to Togo on Thursday and re-establish the partly-dysfunctional radio communication system.

The National Red Cross Societies of Togo and neighbouring countries Ghana and Benin are monitoring the situation and will inform the Federation representations (Lagos Regional Office and Dakar Regional Delegation) on further changes and necessary support required.



Coordination

The Regional Delegation for West & Central Africa in Dakar and the Regional Office in Lagos are coordinating closely with the concerned National Societies and other Movement partners, especially the ICRC, as well as UN organisations. The Regional Delegation will take the lead in monitoring the situation aiming to ensure that all Movement partners are positioned to assist, if needed.

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org/>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal for Nigeria sub-regional programmes (which includes Benin, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria), no. 05AA025 (as part of the Nigeria sub-regional programme Appeal – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA025.pdf).

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Togolese Red Cross – <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=170>

Ghana Red Cross Society - <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=73>