



CÔTE D'IVOIRE: HEALTH HAZARD

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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 185 countries.

In Brief

This DREF Bulletin is being issued based on the situation described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 120,000 (USD 97,704 or EUR 76,164) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 14 September 2006 to respond to the needs in this operation, or to replenish disaster preparedness stocks distributed to the affected population. This operation targets to assist 30,000 beneficiaries and is expected to be implemented over 2 months, to be completed by 10 November 2006; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The situation

Thousands of people have sought medical attention while six have been killed in the economical capital of Côte d’Ivoire, Abidjan, where toxic wastes were deposited in some dumping areas during the night of 19 August 2006. Though it remains unclear what is in the waste, preliminary reports from the laboratories of Centre Ivoirien Anti-Pollution (CIAPOL) and Society of Interventional Radiology (SIR) talk about a product containing acutely toxic, high hydrogen sulphide concentration which, if allowed to stay in the environment, could permeate soils and seep into ground water causing long-term damage and pollution.

Nine zones (Vridi, Koumassi Industrial, Police school, Akouédo, Plateau Dokui, Alépé road, N’dotré in Abobo-Anyama road, MACA and Corridor of Gesco) have been identified in the residential areas where the products were dumped. Residents in those sites complain of health complications including respiratory problems such as exacerbation of asthma and coughs; body rash; nose bleeding; eye irritations; intestinal problems; nausea and vomiting. Treatments, including X-ray scans and medicines, are being provided free of charge at nearly all hospitals in Abidjan. The government is preparing safe sites to evacuate the affected populations. According to the Civil Protection Department, a total of 26,000 people have been affected and will need temporary reallocation to settle in for the next few weeks.

Despite efforts being made by the local social services and other government partners, there is still a big concern in controlling the situation and preventing more casualties. This disaster occurred during the rainy season while an outbreak of cholera is looming in some of the affected zones. Camps have been provided – for the affected populations – to pave way for experts to clean up toxic components in the polluted areas.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Red Cross Society of Côte d’Ivoire (RCSCI), as a long time partner of the government and as an auxiliary of the public authorities, is working along with the Ministry of Health (MoH) in the affected areas. The national society has received technical and financial support from the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is providing generic medicines as well as technical support and the Spanish Red Cross is supporting the motivation of volunteers and Red Cross staff in the field.

A plan of action has been developed by the RCSCI, with the support of the Federation’s sub-regional office in Lagos, based on an assessment report and government recommendations. The national society will implement a two-month operation, focusing on providing essential first aid; community-based health care – while enforcing awareness and prevention to the risk of contamination; hygiene promotion and sanitation activities in the affected districts and other exposed areas of Abidjan.

Plan of Action

Objective: The Red Cross Society Côte d’Ivoire contributes to controlling the consequences of toxic wastes in the most affected and exposed zones of Abidjan in the next two months.

Expected results:

- First-aid assistance, including essential drugs, is provided to the displaced populations in the affected areas;
- 80% of the poor affected families have received medical treatment from the Red Cross emergency clinics;
- The population in the affected zones has become knowledgeable in hygienic practices and sanitation;
- 30,000 families in high risk zones are sensitized to take cautious measures towards toxic waste and cholera;
- 160 volunteers from the eight committees are implementing sensitization activities;
- 8 emergency brigades are mobilized and deployed in the affected zones.

Activities:

- Providing first-aid kits and deploying units into the affected zones;
- Organizing hygiene and sanitation sensitization activities with populations;
- Organizing behavioural change communication (BCC) activities in public places such as markets, bus stations, churches and mosques;
- Conducting sensitization and promoting proper hygiene practices as well as protection against the toxic wastes in the high risk zones;

- Conducting house-to-house sensitization campaigns, targeting mothers
- Distributing sanitation materials;
- Providing psychological support to the affected population;
- Referring people exposed to the toxic elements and those with diarrhoea/suspected cholera to hospitals.

Strategy

The RCSCI will set up first aid emergency and health care units in the affected areas. The response of the Red Cross will concentrate on sensitization campaigns, based on the door-to-door strategy. In the coming month, sensitization visits/campaigns to households and public places will be conducted. During these visits, Red Cross volunteers will deliver key prevention messages on toxic wastes and cholera, explaining the danger of the toxic waste and the basic notions concerning cholera and how it is transmitted.

In addition, the volunteers will demonstrate the right way to wash hands, since cholera is also known as the “dirty hands disease”. They will also promote environmental, individual and collective sanitation; including cleaning latrines with detergent liquid or with a similar product. Because of this, protective masks and sanitation materials such as soap, buckets, water basins, detergent liquid, brooms and brushes will be distributed to achieve the expected results.

Coordination

Since the declaration of the outbreak, the government took the lead in setting up a national crisis committee to oversee the prevention and response which the Red Cross has joined. The MoH and the Ministry of Environment in coordination with the Civil Protection department are organizing the response in providing free health care, temporary shelters to the displaced families and promotion of prevention to contamination. Meanwhile, the UN agencies are mobilizing their resources and personnel to accompany the government during this calamity. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) together with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has been working in controlling cholera.

Budget outline

Type	Value (CHF)
Beneficiaries needs	
Medical and first aid	53,520
Teaching materials	6,333
Other supplies	6,696
Sub-total 1	66,549
Operational needs	
Transport and vehicles	2,170
National staff	34,416
Workshop and training	716
Travel	2,112
Other general expenses	5,637
Stationery	240
Communication	360
Sub-total 2	45,651
Total (without PSR)	112,200
Programme support (6.5%)	7,800
Grand total	120,000

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